

THE
GHOST-SEER.

THE
G H O S T - S E E R !

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

S C H I L L E R .

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF SCHILLER.

“ FREDERICK SCHILLER was the son of an officer in the Bavarian army, who subsequently attained the rank of major, and served in the campaigns for the disputed succession. Frederick was born at Marbach, a little town in Wurtemburgh, on the 10th day of November, 1759, and was finally bred to the surgical profession. His early education was not very favourable for the developement of those great powers which he afterwards discovered, and which burst forth with sudden and impetuous vigour at the age of nineteen, as if indignant at the scholastic discipline and restraints which had been imposed upon them. Schiller pursued his studies at the public seminary of Ludwigsburg, and for several years he went through the regular examinations preparatory to the clerical profession. As he grew older, however, he performed his tasks with less docility and alacrity; he imbibed no very deep regard for the classics as they were there inculcated; while the scholastic forms and regulations proved still more irksome to him. Even at that early age, he began to discover the peculiar bias of his genius: he was fond of walking, reading, and studying alone; he sought Nature in her loneliest scenes; and would stand gazing on the heavens, or watching the progress of the storm. He continued at this seminary upwards of six years; the most irksome and unprofitable, according to his own admission, that he ever spent. He was compelled to drudge through all the preliminary forms and examinations, indiscriminately insisted upon in the Stutgard system, under the patronage and dictation of the

his intention of fixing his residence at Weimar, then conspicuous for the number of its distinguished writers. Goethe was next added to the list of his acquaintance ; but not, during some period at least, to that of his friends. Men of totally opposite minds and character, in a literary view, their first meeting is described as having been somewhat singular ; by no means cordial and pleasing. Schiller being much younger, and of a reserved temper, was rather surprised, than attracted, by the perfect ease and openness, the versatility and extent of information, which Goethe's conversation exhibited ; and declared, after the interview, that he and Goethe were cast in different moulds, that they lived in different worlds, and that it was almost impossible for them ever to understand, or become ultimately acquainted with each other. 'Time, however,' he concluded, 'will try.' It is gratifying to add, that they subsequently grew sincerely attached to each other, assisted in the same undertakings, and for some period, resided with each other. On Schiller's removal to Jena, where he succeeded Eichhorn in the professorship of history, he entered into a matrimonial connection with a lady of the name of Lengefeld, to whom he had some time before been attached. In a letter to one of his friends, he thus alludes to the event, many months afterwards :—'How different does life now begin to appear, seated at the side of a beloved wife, instead of being forsaken and alone, as I have so long been !'

"During his professorship, Schiller entered upon his history of the Thirty Years' War, a work which appeared in 1791. This is universally admitted to be his chief historical performance, no less in Germany than in other countries. A just comparison, however, can scarcely be instituted, his previous work upon the Netherlands having unfortunately never been carried to a conclusion. In the year 1791, he suffered a very severe attack upon his lungs, from which he with difficulty recovered, after it had greatly shattered his constitution. Still, with returning strength, he resumed his labours with equal ardour, and was never heard to utter a complaint. It was on his recovery, that Schiller, for the first time, studied the new Kantian doc-

trine, though it does not appear how far he proceeded through the labyrinths of the transcendental terminology.

“ A number of productions, amongst which ranks the most finished specimen of his dramatic labours, ‘Wallenstein,’ followed his partial restoration to health. But the ardour and impetuosity with which he composed, and which was become too habitual to him for restraint, more especially in his lyric pieces, and his tragedies, brought on a dangerous relapse. All human aid, and human hope, proved alike in vain; and on the 9th day of May, 1805, his disorder reached its crisis, and Schiller, only in his forty-sixth year, had but a few hours to live.

“ Early that morning he grew delirious; but soon this was observed gradually to subside, and he appeared to be settling into a deep slumber. In this state, after continuing during several hours, he awoke about four o’clock in the afternoon, with entire composure, and a perfect consciousness of his situation. His manner was firm and tranquil: he took a tender farewell of his friends and family; and on being asked how he felt, he replied, ‘Only calmer and calmer.’ He once spoke with a happy and lively air; ‘Many things are now becoming clearer and clearer to me!’ Soon afterwards he relapsed into deep sleep, became more and more insensible, though still calm, and in that state he almost imperceptibly expired.

“ Schiller wrote but few prose fictions, though these few are enough to display the great powers he possessed. The ‘*Geisterseher*,’ of which the following is a translation, is the most important and most striking of its kind.”*

This singular romance was written in Dresden, in which town Schiller became enamoured of a beautiful lady, who has been designated by some of his biographers as “*Fraulein A—*.” The intercourse which subsisted between the poet and his charmer appears not to have been of the most reputable kind; but it is certain that, for a time, she held exclusive possession of his heart, and that she even influenced his writings. She was the original of the Princess Eboli, in his play of *Don Carlos*; and it is probable that his passion for her might have suggested that important

* Roscoe’s German Novelists, vol. iii.

part of his story of "the Ghost-Seer" which delineates the mad love entertained by the Prince, for the lady whose fascinations first enthralled him, as he saw her under the rays of the setting sun, praying in the evening solitude of the church in Venice. During his residence in Dresden, and whilst under the intoxicating influence just mentioned, Schiller's mind might well be supposed to have been in an unsettled state; but, though unguided by any determinate and wholesome purpose, it "hovered among a multitude of vast plans," and was on the watch for any object that might give consistency to his views. "The Ghost-Seer" is the first product arising out of this mental fermentation. Its origin may be traced to the tricks of a certain Count Cagliostro, the prince of quacks, whose juggleries were, about that time, turning the heads of the good people at Paris, who paid their money lavishly, in order to be terrified, and to "snatch a fearful joy."

"The Ghost-Seer" is unquestionably one of the "curiosities of literature." It is alone of its kind; and, perhaps, there is no work in the circle of romance, in which the reader is so irresistibly impelled through the pages; or wherein his longing is more acutely excited for a solution of the mystery of the plot. The agency, supernatural as it seems, is, however, all the effect of imposture and extensive confederacy; though even a knowledge of this, in which the reader is made to participate early in the story, does not abate his wonder at the incidents, or lessen the interest he takes in the characters. If any objection may be made to the scheme of the tale, it might be said that it is too intricate; that the conspiracy against the Prince, and the counter-conspiracy to save him, perplex the attention of him who would trace the windings of the labyrinth. Still, who does not feel a keen sympathy in the bewilderment of the amiable but feeble-minded victim of the conspirators? Who does not participate in the honest wishes of the two Englishmen, who strive to protect him from snares such as never before were spread for the ruin of a human being? Who can look without awe at the inscrutable Armenian, or contemplate, unless with a heart-thrill, the terrific agency which his cunning and his science are able to evoke?

O. C.

THE

GHOST-SEER.

Narrative of the Count O——.

I AM about to relate an occurrence, which, to many persons, will appear incredible, yet to which I was myself, in great part, an eye-witness. The few who are acquainted with a certain political event, will (if these leaves should find them alive) have a perfect key to the publication; but without this key, it will be looked upon as an addition to the history of deceit and artifice so often imposed upon mankind. The boldness of the undertaking, which malice was able to conjecture and to pursue, must excite astonishment; while the singularity of the means employed, is calculated to create no less surprise. Genuine, bold truth, will conduct my pen; for when these leaves go into the world, I shall probably be no more, and shall never experience the credit with which they are received.

It was on my return to Courland, in the year 17—, about the time of the Carnival, that I paid a visit to the Prince of W—— in Venice. We had known each other in the P—— military service, and renewed here an acquaintance which peace had interrupted. As I wished to see the remarkable city of Venice, the Prince easily persuaded me to bear him company, and to delay my departure from hence until his remittances, which were expected every day, arrived. We agreed to live together as long as our stay at Venice should last, and the Prince was so kind as to offer to share his habitation with me at the Moor Hotel.

He lived in disguise, because he wished to enjoy himself, and his little income did not permit him to maintain the dignity of his rank. Two cavaliers, upon whose secrecy he could entirely rely, composed (besides some trusty servants) his whole household. He shunned expense more from temperance than economy. He fled from diversions of all kinds ; and at the age of thirty-five years, it may be said, that he had resisted all the charms of that voluptuous city. The fair sex was not regarded by him : gravity, and an almost profound melancholy, overshadowed his mind. His passions were still, but obstinate to excess, his choice slow and fearful ; his attachment warm and lasting. Locked up in his own visionary ideas, he often was a stranger to the world about him ; and, conscious of his own deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he very seldom observed that line of conduct which influences those who are wary and suspicious. No one, perhaps, was more exposed than he, to suffer himself to be influenced and commanded by the opinion of others. No one was more liable to mental weakness ; but as soon as he was once convinced, he possessed equal courage to combat an acknowledged prejudice, and to die for a new one. As the third prince of his house, he could not have any views for the sovereignty ; his ambition, therefore, on that point, was never awakened : his passion had taken quite another direction. Conscious of his own aversion to being governed by the opinion of others, he never forced his own upon any person as a law. The peaceable paths of solitude, and a private life, were the summit of his wishes. He read much, but without selection. A narrow education, together with being initiated into the military service early in life, served to check all application to the study of literature ; all the knowledge which he afterward, acquired added but little to his ideas. He was a Protestant as all his family had been, by birth, not by enquiry, which he never attempted, though he was, in a certain epoch of his life, an enthusiast ; he never, to my knowledge, became a free-mason.

One evening we, as usual, took a walk by ourselves, very well masked, upon St. Mark's Place. As it grew late, and the people were dispersing, the Prince observed that a

mask followed us every where. The mask was an Armenian, and walked alone. We doubled our steps, and sought by striking into different turns of our road to lose him, but in vain, for he always remained close behind us.

"You have not had, I hope, any intrigue here?" said the Prince at last to me. "The husbands at Venice are very dangerous." "I know not one lady," I replied. "Let us sit down here, and speak German," he continued: "I imagine they mistake us for some other persons." We sat down upon a stone bench, and expected that the mask would pass by. He came straight towards us, and took his seat very close by the side of the Prince; who drew out his watch, and said rather loud, in French, rising at the same time from his seat, "Nine — come! we forget that they wait for us at the *Louvre*." This was only a pretence to deceive the mask as to our route. "Nine!" repeated the mask in the same language, very expressively and slowly. "Wish yourself joy, Prince (whilst he called him by his right name); *at nine o'clock he died*." With this he rose, and went away: we looked at one another very much amazed. "Who is dead?" said the Prince, after a long silence. "Let us follow him," said I, "and request an explanation."

We hurried through all the by-ways of St. Mark, but the mask was not to be found. Chagrined at our bad success, we proceeded to our hotel. The Prince spoke not a word in our way home, but walked apart from me, apparently in deep reflection, and greatly agitated, as he afterwards confessed to me. When we got home, assuming an air of gaiety — "It is indeed laughable," said he, "that a madman should thus be able to disturb the tranquillity of a person's mind by a couple of words."

We wished each other a good night; and as soon as I was in my own room, I noted in my pocket-book the day and the hour when this extraordinary event happened — it was upon a Thursday. The following evening the Prince said to me, — "Let us take a walk again to St. Mark's Place, and try to discover this mysterious Armenian. I am very anxious to unravel this adventure."

I agreed to the proposal, and we remained till eleven

o'clock wandering about the place: the Armenian was nowhere to be seen. We repeated our visits the four following evenings, and each time with the same bad success. The sixth evening, when we left our hotel, I had the foresight to tell the servants where we might be found, if there should be any enquiry after us. The Prince observed this, and praised my attention with a smiling countenance. There was a great crowd upon St. Mark's Place when we arrived there; and we scarcely had gone thirty steps, when I observed the Armenian, who pushed himself through the crowd in great haste, and seemed to be in the act of searching for somebody. We were just upon the point of reaching him, when the Baron F——, one of the Prince's companions, came breathless towards us, and delivered a letter to the Prince.

"It is sealed black," said he; and we thought that it might contain intelligence of great consequence. It struck me like a thunderbolt. The Prince went to a lamp, and began to read the contents. "My consin is dead," he cried. "When?" said I, interrupting him hastily. He once more read the letter. "Last Thursday, at nine o'clock in the evening." We scarcely had time to recover ourselves from our surprise, when the Armenian appeared. "You are known here, gracious Sire," said he to the Prince. "Hasten to the Moor: you'll find there ambassadors from the Senate, and do not hesitate to accept the honour which they will offer you. The Baron F—— forgot to tell you that your remittances are arrived."

He left us precipitately, and mingled with the crowd. We hastened to our hotel, and found every thing as the Armenian had announced to us. Three noblemen of the Republic were there ready to receive the Prince, and to conduct him with splendour to the assembly, where the first nobility of the city expected him. He had just time enough to let me understand, by a slight hint, that he wished me to sit up for him. About eleven o'clock at night he returned. He came into the room serious and thoughtful; and, after having dismissed the servants, he seized me by the hand. "Count," he said, in the words of Hamlet, "there are more things in heaven and earth

than are dreamt of in our philosophy." "Gracious Sir," I replied, "you seem to forget that you are enriched with the prospect of a sovereignty."* "Do not remind me of that," said the Prince; "I have something of greater importance to me than a crown that now claims my attention, if that Armenian has not been at guess-work." "How is that possible, Prince?" I replied. "Then will I resign all my princely hope for the habit of a monk."

The following evening we went together earlier to the market-place. A heavy shower of rain obliged us to take shelter in a coffee-house, where we observed a number of persons at a gaming-table. The Prince placed himself behind the chair of a Spaniard to see the game played, whilst I went into an adjoining room to read the papers. A little time afterwards I heard a noise. Before the arrival of the Prince, the Spaniard universally lost; but since he entered, the latter won upon every card. The whole game was totally changed, and the bank was in danger of being broken by the man whom this lucky reverse of fortune had made bolder. The Venetian, who kept it, said to the Prince in a surly tone, — "You have changed the luck, and shall quit the table." The Prince looked at him coolly, without giving him an answer, and kept his place; but the Venetian repeated his command in French. The latter thought that the Prince did not understand either language; and, addressing himself to the company with a sneering grin — "Tell me, gentlemen," said he, "how I shall make myself understood by this fool?" Hereupon he stood up, and would have struck the Prince; but the Prince's patience forsaking him, he did not wait for the attack, but seized the Venetian by the throat, and dashed him with violence on the ground. This circumstance threw the whole house into confusion. Upon hearing the uproar, I ran into the room, and unguardedly called him by his name. "Take care, Prince," said I, incautiously; "we are in Venice!"

* The deceased was the hereditary Prince, the only son of the reigning —, who was in years, very sickly, and without the least prospect of having an heir to his dominions. An uncle of our Prince, almost in the same situation, now alone stood between him and the throne. I am obliged to mention this circumstance, as the subject will be treated of in the work.

The name of the Prince excited an universal silence, and soon after a confused murmur ran through the assembly, which appeared to me to have a dangerous tendency. The Italians present crowded round each other, and walked aside. They soon quitted the room, one after the other, and we found ourselves left only with the Spaniard and several Frenchmen. "You are lost, gracious Sir," said a Frenchman, "if you do not leave the city directly. The Venetian, whom you have handled so roughly, is rich enough to hire a bravo; — it will only cost him fifty sequins to be revenged by your death."

The Spaniard, in concert with the Frenchmen, offered to conduct the Prince with safety to his house. We were standing thus consulting what was best to be done, when the door of the room was suddenly opened, and several officers of the *State Inquisition* entered. They produced an order from the government, in which we were both commanded to follow them immediately. They conducted us under a strong escort to a canal, where a boat waited for us. We were ordered to embark; but before we quitted it, our eyes were blindfolded; and, upon our landing, we found that they led us up a stone staircase, and then through a long winding passage over arches, as we could discover by the repeated echoes that sounded under our feet. We then arrived at another staircase, which in twenty-six steps brought us to the bottom. We then heard a door creak upon its hinges; and when they took the bandage from our eyes, we found ourselves in a spacious hall, encircled by an assembly of venerable old men. All appeared in sable robes; and the hall, hung with black cloth, was dimly lighted by a few scattered tapers. A deadly silence prevailed through the assembly, which caused in us an awful sensation, too powerful to be described. One of the old men, who appeared to be the principal State Inquisitor, came near to the Prince, and spoke to him with a solemn countenance, whilst another set before him the Venetian.

"Do you acknowledge this man to be the same that you used so roughly in the coffee-house?" "Yes!" answered the Prince. Then turning to the prisoner — "Is that the person you would have assassinated this evening?" The

prisoner answered, "Yes." Immediately the judges opened the circle, and we saw, with the utmost horror, the head of the Venetian separated from his shoulders. "Are you satisfied with this sacrifice?" said the State Inquisitor. The Prince fainted in the arms of his conductors. "Go," he continued, with a terrible voice, as he turned towards me; "and think in future more favourably of the administration of justice in Venice."

We could not learn who our unknown friend was, who had thus delivered us, by the arm of justice, from the diabolical plans of the assassin. We reached our habitation terrified in the extreme. It was midnight. The chamberlain Z—— waited for us upon the stairs with great impatience. "How lucky it was," said he to the Prince, as he lighted us up stairs, "that you sent the messenger as you did; the intelligence from the Baron, which was brought to this house from the market-place, excited in us a dreadful anxiety for your safety." "I sent a message!" said the Prince. "When? I know nothing of it." "This evening, after eight o'clock, a person arrived, and said, we must not be alarmed if you should not return until late at night." Here the Prince said to me, — "You, perhaps, without my knowledge, have taken this precaution." "I know nothing of it," said I. "It must certainly be so, your Highness," said the chamberlain; "for here is your watch, which he left with me as a proof that he had been with you." The Prince felt his pocket immediately: the watch was actually gone, and, looking upon that which the chamberlain held in his hand, he acknowledged it to be his own. "Who brought it?" said he, with eagerness. "An unknown mask in an Armenian habit, who immediately went away." We stood and looked at each other in silent horror. "What think you of this?" said the Prince at last, after a long pause; "it is now certain that I have in Venice a secret inspector."

The frightful transactions of this night threw the Prince into a fever, which confined him to his room for eight days. During this time our hotel was crowded with citizens and strangers, who had lately learned the rank of the Prince. They strove to vie with each other in showing civility to

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him ; and we saw with pleasure every night how fast suspicion was wearing away. Love-letters and billets came from all quarters. Every person endeavoured to make himself useful. The whole proceedings of the State Inquisition were no longer thought of. In the mean time, the Court of ——— did not wish to hasten the departure of the Prince, and therefore gave instructions to a rich banker in Venice to furnish him with large sums of money. Thus he was put into a condition, contrary to his inclination, of remaining longer in Italy ; and, agreeably to his wishes, I consented not to hasten my departure. As soon as he was so far recovered as to be able to leave his chamber, the physician ordered him to make an excursion upon the Brenta for the benefit of the air. The weather was fine, and we soon made an agreeable party. Just as we were about to step into the gondola, the Prince missed a key to a little box which contained some valuable papers. We returned immediately to look for it. He remembered perfectly to have locked the box the day before, and since that time he had not quitted the room. But all our efforts to discover the key were fruitless: we therefore abandoned the search ; and the Prince, whose soul was above suspicion, gave it over as lost, but requested me not to take any notice of it. The voyage was delightfully enchanting : the landscape seemed to increase in beauty and variety at every turn of the river ; added to this, a clear sky, which, in the middle of February, formed a May-day. The charming gardens that surrounded the elegant country houses which every where adorned the sides of the Brenta, together with the majestic Venice crowned with a hundred towers, as if rising from the water, offered us one of the most delightful prospects in the world. We lost ourselves entirely in the beautiful magic of the scenery around us. Our spirits were elated ; and even the Prince assumed an air of gaiety, and joined with us in our frolicksome pleasantries. Sweet music occupied our attention, when we got to the shore about two Italian miles from the town. It proceeded from a small village where they were holding a fair. Here every art was practised by the company. A troop of young maidens and children, dressed in a theatrical manner, wel-

comed us with a pantomimic dance. The invention was new: nimbleness and grace animated every motion. Before the dance was ended, one of them, who seemed to be the principal person, and who acted the part of the queen, suddenly stopped, as if restrained by an invisible power. She stood still; all followed her example; and the music ceased. An universal silence prevailed in the whole assembly, whilst she remained with her eyes fixed upon the ground as in a profound trance; then she became as if inspired, looked wild, and cried in a transport of joy—"A king is amongst us!"

She arose, took her crown from her head, and placed it at the feet of the Prince. All who were present directed their eyes towards the Prince, who was a long time uncertain what could be the meaning of this juggle, so well had she acted the monkey tricks of this farce. At length an universal clapping of hands interrupted this silence. I looked at the Prince, and perceived that he was not a little concerned and hurt to be examined by the enquiring eyes of the company. He distributed money to the children, and hastened from the crowd. We had not gone far, when a venerable monk came from the throng, and placed himself in the path we were pursuing.

"Sir," said the monk, "bestow some of your money upon Madonna; you will need her prayers."

He spoke this in a tone which startled us—the crowd, however, soon separated him from us. Our suite was in the mean time increased. An English lord, whom the Prince had seen before at Nizza, several merchants from Leghorn, a German prelate, a French abbé, with several ladies, and a Russian officer, attached themselves to our party. The physiognomy of this last had something so remarkable about it, that it attracted our attention. Never in my life did I see so many traits, and so little character; so much inviting benevolence, and such forbidding coldness, painted together in one man's countenance. Every passion seemed to have formerly dwelt there, and to have abandoned it. Nothing remained but the still piercing look of a perfect man of the world. Every eye was fixed upon him

wherever he went. This stranger followed at a distance, and seemed indifferent to whatever was going on. We arrived at the booth where a lottery was kept: the ladies bought tickets—we followed their example, and the Prince also purchased a share. He won a snuff-box; and, when he opened it, I perceived him turn pale, and start back with the utmost surprise—the little key he had lost was in it. “What is this?” said he to me when we were alone, with a fixed countenance; “an unknown power pursues me; an all-powerful being hovers over me; an invisible agency, which I cannot flee from, watches over all my actions. I must seek the Armenian, and obtain an explanation from him.”

The sun was setting as we arrived at the pleasure-house where the supper was served up. The name of the Prince had increased our party to the number of sixteen persons. Besides our former companions, a virtuoso from Rome, several Swiss, and an adventurer from Palermo, who wore an uniform, and gave himself out for a captain, insinuated themselves into our society. It was agreed to spend the whole evening here, and to return home by torchlight. The entertainment at the table was good, and the conversation very sprightly; the Prince could not refrain from relating the adventure of the key, which excited a general astonishment. A great dispute arose concerning this affair:—the major part of the company had the temerity to think all these cunning tricks depended upon witchcraft. The Abbé, who had already drank a sufficient quantity of wine, challenged the whole kingdom of ghosts into the ring. The Englishman talked blasphemy, while another made sign of the cross to avert the devil. A few, in the number of whom was the Prince, maintained that it was better not to give any decided opinion upon these subjects. During this conversation the Russian officer entertained himself with the ladies, and seemed to be perfectly inattentive to our discussion. In the height of this dispute, no one observed that the Sicilian had retired. A short time afterwards he returned, clothed in a mantle, and placed himself behind the chair of the Frenchman.

“You have had the boldness,” said he, “to challenge

all the kingdom of ghosts. — Will you try one ?” “ Yes !” said the Abbé, “ if you will undertake to bring one before me.” “ That I will,” replied the Sicilian, turning himself about, “ when these ladies and gentlemen shall have left us.” “ Why so !” exclaimed the Englishman ; “ a jovial ghost will enjoy himself in such good company.” “ I will not answer for the consequences,” said the Sicilian. “ Oh, heavens !” cried the ladies, and fled, terrified, from their seats. “ Let your ghost come,” said the Abbé, daringly, “ but warn him beforehand that he will find here sharp-pointed tools ;” at the same time endeavouring to borrow a sword. “ You may do, in that respect, as you please,” said the Sicilian coolly, “ when you see it.”

Here he turned himself towards the Prince. “ Gracious Sir,” said he to him, “ you believe that your key was in strange hands — can you guess in whose ?” “ No.” “ Do you suspect any body ?” “ I had certainly a suspicion.” “ Should you know the person if you were to see him ?” “ Without doubt.”

Here the Sicilian put aside his mantle, and took from under it a looking-glass, which he held before the eyes of the Prince. “ Is this the man ?” The Prince started back with the utmost terror. “ What have you seen ?” asked I. “ The Armenian !” The Sicilian put the glass under his mantle. “ Was that the person you meant ?” enquired the whole company. “ The very same.”

Upon this, every countenance was changed, no one was heard to laugh, and all eyes were fixed attentively upon the Sicilian. “ Monsieur Abbé,” said the Englishman, “ this thing becomes serious : I advise you to think of your retreat.” “ The fellow is in league with the devil,” cried the Frenchman, and rushed out of the house. The ladies ran shrieking from the hall — the virtuoso followed them — the German prelate snored in his chair — the Russian remained sitting as if perfectly indifferent to what was passing.

“ You thought, perhaps, to have excited a great laugh,” said the Prince, “ against this boaster, if he had not gone out ; or did you intend to have performed what you promised ?” “ It is true,” said the Sicilian, “ with the

Abbé I was not in earnest; I took him at his word, because I knew that the coward would not suffer me to go so far as to put it in execution. The thing itself is of too serious a nature to make a joke of." "You maintain, then, that you have it in your power to do what you asserted?" The magician was silent, and seemed to be studying the expressive countenance of the Prince. "Yes," answered he, at length.

The curiosity of the Prince was already excited to the highest degree, for he had always believed in supernatural beings, and this act of the Armenian brought back to his mind all his former reflections on this subject, which reason had in some measure driven away. He went aside with the Sicilian, and I heard him conversing with him very earnestly. "You have before you a man," continued he, "who burns with impatience for an explanation of this affair. I would esteem that man as my benefactor, as my best friend, who would, in this respect, remove my doubts, and dissipate the mist from my eyes. — Will you do me this great service?" "What do you require of me?" said the magician with thoughtfulness. "To give me immediately a proof of your art; let me see an apparition." "Why should I do this?" "That you may judge, from a nearer acquaintance, whether I am worthy of higher instruction." "I esteem you above all others, mighty Prince. A secret power in your countenance, which you yourself are ignorant of, bound me at first sight irresistibly to you. You are more powerful than you are aware of. You have an undoubted right to command all my power, but —" "Then allow me to see an apparition." "I must be first certain that you do not make this request out of curiosity; for, although the supernatural powers are subjected to my will in some respects, it is under the sacred condition that I do not abuse my authority." "My motives are the purest. I wish for an explanation of facts."

Here they left their places, and approached to a distant window, where I could not hear what was said. The Englishman, who had also heard this conversation, took me aside. "Your prince has a noble mind," said he;

"but I pity him, for I will bet my life he has to deal with a sharper." "That will be proved," said I, "when he comes to investigate this matter." "Let me tell you," said the Englishman, "that the devil makes himself very dear. He will not practise his art without touching the cash. There are nine of us. We will make a collection. This will break the neck of his scheme, and perhaps open the eyes of the Prince." "I am content," said I.

The Englishman immediately threw six guineas into a plate, and gathered in the ring. Each gave several louis. The Russian especially was highly pleased at our proposal; he put a bank note of a hundred sequins into the plate—a piece of extravagance which startled the Englishman. We brought the collection to the Prince. "Have the goodness," said the Englishman, "to entreat, in our names, that gentleman to let us see a proof of his art, and persuade him to accept this small token of our acknowledgments for his trouble." The Prince also put a costly ring into the plate, and presented it to the Sicilian. He considered of our proposal. "Gentlemen," he began, "this unexpected generosity is highly flattering. I obey your wishes. Your desires shall be fulfilled." In the mean time he rang the bell. "With respect to this money," he continued, "to which I have no right, if you will give me leave, I will present it to the nearest monastery, as a gratuity towards so benevolent an institution. This ring I shall always keep, as a valuable proof of the goodness of the best of princes."

Here the master of the house entered, to whom he immediately delivered the money. "He is still a swindler," said the Englishman, "although he refuses the gold. It is done that he may get more into the Prince's favour." Another said, "The landlord is in league with him." "What would you wish to see?" said the Sicilian to the Prince. "Let us have a great man," said the Lord: "challenge the Pope Ganginelli; it will be the same to this gentleman." The Sicilian bit his lips. "I dare not call for one who has received extreme unction." "That is bad," said the Englishman; "perhaps we should learn from him of what disorder he died." "The Marquis of

Lanoy," said the Prince, "was a French brigadier in a former war, and my most intimate friend. In a battle near Hastinbeck he received a deadly wound. They took him to my tent, where he soon after died in my arms. Before he expired—'Prince,' said he, 'I shall never again behold my native country; I will therefore intrust you with a secret, which is known to no one but myself. In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders, there lives a——' At that instant he expired. Death destroyed the thread of his discourse. I could wish to have him brought before me, and to hear the conclusion of his tale." "Well requested, by Heaven," said the Englishman; "I shall esteem you as the greatest conjurer in the world if you comply with this request." We admired the wise choice of the Prince, and unanimously gave our consent to the proposition. In the mean time the magician walked up and down the room with hasty steps, and seemed to be holding a conference with himself. "And was that all which the deceased communicated to you?" "All." "Did you make any further enquiries, on account of what you heard, in his native country?" "It was in vain." "Did the Marquis of Lanoy live irreproachably? for I dare not call any one I please from the dead." "He died with penitence for the sins of his youth." "Have you about you any token of his?" "Yes." The Prince had actually a snuff-box, on the lid of which a miniature picture of the Marquis was painted in enamel, which he usually laid near him upon the table. "I do not desire to know what it is. Leave me alone: you shall see the deceased."

We were desired to go into another apartment, and wait until he called for us. At the same time he ordered all the moveables to be taken from the hall, the windows to be taken out, and the window shutters to be put close to. He also ordered the landlord, with whom he had already been conniving, to bring in a vessel filled with hot coals, and to put out all the fires in the house carefully with water. Before we returned, he made us all promise that we would observe a profound silence during the whole of what we should see or hear. All the doors of the

rooms behind us leading to this apartment were fastened. The clock had struck eleven. A deadly silence prevailed through the whole house. Before we went out, the Russian said to me—"Have we any loaded pistols with us?" "Why?" said I. "It is at all events convenient," answered he. "Wait a minute, and I will go and see after some."

He went out, and the Baron and myself opened a window which looked towards another room, and we thought we heard people talking together, and a noise as if they were placing a ladder under it; but as that might only be a conjecture, I dared not give it out as certain. The Russian returned with a brace of pistols, after being absent about half an hour. We saw him load them. It was now near two o'clock when the magician appeared again, and announced that he was prepared. Before we returned, he ordered us to pull off our shoes, and to appear in our shirts, stockings, and under garments. The doors as before were all fastened. We found, when we returned into the hall, a large circle made with coals, in which we could all stand very conveniently. Round about the room, and by the four walls, the boards were taken away, so that we seemed to stand as it were upon an island. An altar, hung with black cloth, was erected in the middle of the circle, under which was spread a carpet of red silk; a Chaldean Bible lay open near a death's head upon the altar, and a silver crucifix was fastened in the centre. Instead of candles, spirits were burning in a silver vessel. A thick smoke of olive wood darkened the hall, which almost extinguished the lights. The conjurer was clothed as we were, but barefooted. On his bare neck he wore an amulet* suspended by a chain of human hair. Upon his loins he wore a white mantle, which was decorated with magical characters and mysterious figures. He made us join hands, and maintain a deep silence. Above all, he recommended us not to ask the apparition any questions. He requested the English-

* Amulet was the name of a charm made of wood or other materials, and on which was engraved particular words and characters, and worn about the neck, to subvert the machinations of the Devil and his agents. They were held in high esteem by the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, and particularly amongst the Catholics.

man and myself (for he seemed to entertain the greatest suspicion of us) to hold two drawn swords, steadily and cross-wise, an inch above his head, as long as the ceremony should last. We stood in a half circle around him. The Russian officer pressed near to the Englishman, and stood next to the altar. The magician placed himself upon the carpet, with his face towards the east, sprinkled holy water to the four points of the compass, and bowed thrice before the Bible. A quarter of an hour passed in ceremonious acts, perfectly unintelligible to us; at the end of which, he gave those a sign who stood behind him to hold him fast by the hair. Struggling apparently with dreadful convulsions, he called the deceased by name three times; at the last, he stretched out his hand towards the crucifix. We instantly experienced a violent shock, which separated our hands. A sudden clap of thunder shook the house to its foundation; at the same time the window shutters rattled, and all the doors were burst open. The apparatus fell in pieces, and as soon as the light was extinguished, we observed distinctly on the wall over the chimney-piece the figure of a man clothed in a bloody garment, with a pale and livid aspect.

"Who called me?" cried a faint, hollow voice. "Thy friend," said the conjurer, "who venerates thy memory, and prays for thy soul." At the same time he mentioned the name of the Prince. "What does he want?" continued the ghost, after a very long pause. "He wishes to hear your confession to the end, which you began in this world but did not finish." "In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders there lives—" Here the house shook again, the door opened of its own accord, and a violent clap of thunder was heard, as a flash of lightning illuminated the room. Immediately another figure, bloody and pale like the first, appeared at the threshold. The spirits in the vase began to burn again, and the hall was as it first appeared.

"Who is among us?" cried the magician, looking with horror and astonishment at the spectators. "I did not much wish for thee." The ghost immediately walked with a slow and majestic step to the altar, and stood upon the carpet opposite to us. It seized the crucifix, and the first

apparition instantly vanished. "Who is it that has called me?" said the second apparition. The magician began to tremble. Fear and astonishment almost overpowered us. I now seized a pistol—the magician wrested it from my hand, and fired at the ghost. The ball rolled along the altar, and the figure remained amidst the smoke unhurt. The magician immediately sunk down in a fit.

"What have we here?" exclaimed the Englishman with astonishment, as he endeavoured to strike the ghost with his sword. The apparition arrested his arm, and the sword fell to the ground. Here the sweat of anguish started from my forehead, and the Baron confessed to us afterwards that he employed himself in praying. All this time the Prince stood fearless and unmoved, with his eyes riveted upon the figure. "Yes!" said he at last, pathetically, "I know thee: thou art Lanoy—thou art my friend. From whence dost thou come?" "I cannot divulge the mysteries of eternity.—Ask me any question that relates to my existence on earth." "Who lives in the cloister," said the Prince, "of which you gave me notice at the hour of your death?" "My daughter." "How! Have you ever been a father?" "I would that I had not been." "Are you not happy, Lanoy?" "God is my judge." "Can I not render you any service in this world?" "None; but think of yourself." "How must I do that?" "You will learn it at Rome."

Immediately a clap of thunder was heard—a thick smoke filled the room; and when it cleared up, the figure had vanished. I pushed open a window-shutter—it was day-light.

The conjurer soon recovered his senses. "Where are we?" he cried, when he saw the day-light. The Russian officer stood close behind him; and looking over his shoulder, "Juggler," he said, with a piercing frown, "this is the last time thou wilt ever have it in thy power to summon another ghost to appear on earth." The Sicilian turned hastily round; and, looking stedfastly in his face, uttered a loud shriek, and fell senseless on the ground. Immediately the pretended Russian was discovered by the Prince to be no other person than his mysterious friend the Armenian.

No language can paint the horror this circumstance occasioned in the mind of the Prince, and the consternation that generally pervaded the company. We stood motionless as we surveyed this awful being, who penetrated us to the soul with his looks. A dead silence reigned for some minutes: at length several loud knocks at the door roused us from a state of stupefaction. The noise continued, and the door was soon after shattered in pieces, when several police officers, with a guard, rushed into the hall. "Here we find them altogether," cried the commander, turning to his followers. "In the name of the government," (addressing himself to us) cried he, "I arrest you all."

We had scarcely time to recollect ourselves, ere we were all surrounded by the guard. The Russian, whom I shall now call the Armenian, took the commander aside; and notwithstanding the confusion we were in, I observed that he whispered something in his ear, and showed him a paper, at the sight of which the man bowed respectfully and retired—as he passed us he took off his hat. "Forgive me, gentlemen," said he, "for having confounded you with this impostor. I will not ask who you are; this person assures me that I have men of honour before me."

In the mean time he gave his people a hint to withdraw from us. He commanded them, however, to seize the Sicilian, and to bind him. "This fellow has reigned long enough," added he; "we have been upon the watch for him these seven months."

The miserable wretch was indeed an object of pity. The sudden fright which the second apparition occasioned, and the unexpected reproach from the Armenian, had overpowered his senses. He suffered himself to be bound without the least opposition. His eyes rolled in his head, and a death-like paleness spread itself over his countenance, as at intervals he heaved convulsive sighs. Every moment we expected that he would become frantic. The Prince pitied his distress, and undertook to solicit his discharge from the leader of the police, to whom he discovered his rank. "Gracious Prince," said the officer, "do you know who this man is? and for whom you so generously intercede? The tricks which he practised to deceive you are the

least of his crimes. We have already secured his accomplices, and they have discovered transactions which he has been concerned in of the most horrid nature. He may think himself well off if he escapes with banishment to the galleys."

In the mean time we observed the landlord and his family fettered and led through the yard. "Is that man guilty?" cried the Prince; "what has he done?" "He was his accomplice," said the officer, "and assisted him in his mountebank tricks and robberies, and shared the spoil with him. I will convince you immediately, gracious Sir, of the truth of my assertion" (turning towards his followers). "Search the house," he cried, "and bring me immediately intelligence as to what you discover."

The Prince looked for the Armenian, but he was gone. In the confusion which this unexpected circumstance occasioned, he found means to steal off without being observed. The Prince was inconsolable: he determined to send servants after him, and also search for him himself; and, hurrying with me to the window, we observed the whole house surrounded by the populace, whom the account of this event had drawn to the spot. "It is impossible to make our way through the crowd," said I; "and if it is the intention of the Armenian to elude our search, he certainly knows the means to do it effectually: let us rather stay here a little longer, gracious Sir. Perhaps this officer of the police can give us some information respecting him, to whom he has, if I have rightly observed, discovered himself."

We recollected that we were still in an undress, and promising to return soon, we hastened into a room to put on our clothes as quickly as possible. When we came back, the searching of the house was finished. After they had removed the altar, and forced up the boards of the floor, they discovered a vault where a man was able to sit upright, which was separated by a secret door from a narrow staircase that led to a gloomy cave. In this abyss they found an electrical machine, a clock, and a small silver bell; which last, as well as the electrical machine, had a communication with the altar and the crucifix that was fixed upon it. A hole had been made in the window-shutter opposite the chimney

which opened and shut with a slide. In this hole, as we learned afterwards, was fixed a magic lantern, from which the figure of the ghost had been reflected on the opposite wall over the chimney. From the garret and the cave they brought several drums, to which large leaden bullets were fastened by strings: these had probably been used to imitate the roaring of thunder which we had heard. In searching the Sicilian's clothes, they found in a case different powders, genuine mercury in vials and boxes, phosphorus in a glass bottle, and a ring, which we immediately knew to be magnetic, because it adhered to a steel button that had been placed near to it by accident. In his coat pockets were a rosary, a Jew's beard, a dagger, and a pocket pistol. "Let us see if it is loaded," said one of the watch, and fired up the chimney. "Jesus Maria!" cried a voice, which we knew to be the same as that we had heard when the first spirit appeared; and at the same instant we beheld a bleeding person tumbling down the chimney. "What! not yet at rest, poor ghost?" cried the Englishman, whilst we started back affrighted. "Go to thy grave. Thou hast appeared what thou wast not, and now thou wilt be what thou hast appeared." "Jesus Maria! I am wounded!" replied the man. The ball had fractured his right leg. Care was immediately taken to have the wound dressed.

"But who art thou?" said the English lord; "and what evil spirit brought thee here?" "I am a poor solitary monk," answered the wounded man. "A strange gentleman offered me a zechin to—" "Repeat your magical lesson. And why did you not withdraw immediately you had finished?" "I was waiting for a signal to continue my speech, as had been agreed on between us; but as this signal was not given, I was endeavouring to get off, when I found the ladder had been removed." "And what was the formula he taught thee?"

The wounded man fainted: nothing more could be got from him. When we observed his features more minutely, we discovered him to be the same man that stood in the pathway of the Prince the evening before, and asked alms for the Madonna. The Prince addressed the leader of the watch, giving him at the same time some

pieces of gold. "You have rescued us," said he, "from the hands of a deceiver, and done us justice even without knowing us: increase our gratitude by telling us who the stranger was, that, by speaking only a few words, procured us our liberty?" "Whom do you mean?" asked the officer, with a countenance which seemed to indicate that the question was useless. "The gentleman in a Russian uniform, who took you aside, showed you a written paper, and whispered in your ear, in consequence of which you immediately set us free." "Do not you know the gentleman?" said the officer. "Was he not one of your company?" "No," said the Prince; "and I have very important reasons for wishing to be acquainted with him." "He is a perfect stranger to me too," replied the officer; "even his name is unknown to me. I saw him to-day for the first time in my life." "How! And was he able in so short a space of time, and by using only a few words, to convince you that we were all innocent?" "Undoubtedly, Sire, with a single word." "And this was?—I confess I wish to know it." "This stranger, my Prince," (weighing the zechins in his hand)—"you have been too generous for me to make it any longer a mystery—this stranger is an officer of the Inquisition." "Of the Inquisition!—What! that man?" "Nothing else, my Prince. I was convinced of it by the paper which he showed to me." "That man did you say? It cannot be." "I will tell you more, my Prince; it was upon his information that I have been sent here to arrest the conjurer."

We looked at each other with the utmost astonishment.

"Now we know," said the English lord, "why the poor devil of a sorcerer started when he came near his face. He knew him to be a spy, and for that reason he made such a horrible outcry, and threw himself at his feet." "No," interrupted the Prince; "this man is whatever he wishes to be, and whatever the moment requires him to be. No mortal ever knew what he really was. Did not you see the knees of the Sicilian sink under him, when he said, with a terrible voice, 'Thou shalt no more call a ghost.' There is something mysterious in this matter. No person can persuade me that one man should

be thus alarmed at the sight of another, without some most essential reason." "The conjurer will probably explain it the best," said the English lord, "if that gentleman" (pointing to the officer) "will procure us an opportunity of speaking to his prisoner." The officer consented to it; and, after having agreed with the Englishman to visit the Sicilian in the morning, we returned to Venice.*

Lord Seymour (this was the name of the Englishman) called upon us very early in the forenoon, and was soon after followed by a person whom the officer had intrusted with the care of conducting us to the prison. I forgot to mention, that one of the Prince's domestics, a native of Bremen, who had served him many years with the strictest fidelity, and who possessed his confidence, had been missing for several days. Whether he had met with any accident, been kidnapped, or had voluntarily absented himself, was a secret to every one. The last supposition was extremely improbable, as his conduct had always been regular and irreproachable. All that his companions could recollect was, that he had been for some time very melancholy, and that, whenever he had a moment's leisure, he used to visit a certain monastery in the Giudecca, where he had formed an acquaintance with some monks. This led us to suppose that he might have fallen into the hands of the priests, and had been persuaded to turn Catholic. The Prince was indifferent about matters of this kind, and the few enquiries he caused to be made proving unsuccessful, he gave up the search. He, however, regretted the loss of this man, who had so constantly attended him in his campaigns, — had always been faithfully attached to him, — and whom it was therefore difficult to replace in a foreign country. The very same day the Prince's banker, whom he had commissioned to provide him with another servant, came at the moment we were going out; he pre-

* Count O —, whose narrative I have thus far literally copied, describes minutely the various effects of this adventure upon the mind of the Prince, and of his companions, and recounts a variety of tales of apparitions, which this event gave occasion to introduce. I shall omit giving them to the reader, on the supposition that he is as curious as myself to know the conclusion of the adventure, and its effects on the conduct of the Prince. I shall only add, that the Prince got no sleep the remainder of the night, and that he waited with impatience for the moment which was to disclose this incomprehensible mystery.

sented to the Prince a well-dressed man, of a good appearance, about forty years of age, who had been for a long time secretary to a procurator; spoke French and a little German, and was besides furnished with the best recommendations. The Prince was pleased with the man's physiognomy; and as he declared that he would be satisfied with such wages as his service should be found to merit, the Prince engaged him immediately.

We found the Sicilian in a private prison, where, as the keeper assured us, he had been lodged for the present, to accommodate the Prince, as he was to be confined in future under the lead roofs, to which there is no access. These lead roofs are the most terrible dungeons in Venice. They are situated on the top of the Palace of St. Mark, and the miserable criminals suffer so excessively from the heat of the leads, occasioned by the burning rays of the sun descending directly upon them, that they frequently become distracted. The Sicilian had recovered from his terror, and rose respectfully at the sight of the Prince. He had fetters on one hand and one leg, but he was able to walk about the room. The keeper left the dungeon as soon as we had entered.

"I come," said the Prince, "to request an explanation of you on two subjects. — You owe me the one, and it shall not be to your disadvantage if you grant me the other." "My part is now acted," replied the Sicilian: "my destiny is in your hands." "Your sincerity alone can mitigate your punishment." "Ask, my Prince; I am ready to answer you. I have nothing more to lose." "You showed me the face of the Armenian in your looking-glass — How was it done?" "What you saw was no looking-glass — a portrait in pastel behind a glass, representing a man in an Armenian dress, deceived you. The want of light, your astonishment, and my own dexterity, favoured the deception. The picture itself must have been found among the other things seized at the inn." "But how came you so well acquainted with my ideas as to hit upon the Armenian?" "This was not difficult, my Prince. You have, perhaps, frequently mentioned your adventure with the Armenian at table, in presence of

your domestics. One of my servants got accidentally acquainted with one of yours in the Giudecca, and soon learned from him as much as I wished to know." "Where is this man?" asked the Prince; "I miss him, and in all probability you are acquainted with the place of his retreat, and the reason why he deserted my service." "I swear to you, gracious Sir, that I know not the least of him. I have never seen him myself, nor had any other concern with him than the one before mentioned."

"Go on," said the Prince. "By this means also, I received the first information of your residence, and of your adventures at Venice; and I resolved immediately to profit by them. Your Highness sees that I am ingenuous. I was apprised of your intended excursion on the Brenta—I was prepared for it: and a key, that dropped by chance from your pocket, afforded me the first opportunity of trying my art upon you." "How! Have I been mistaken? The adventure of the key then was a trick of yours, and not of the Armenian?—You say this key fell from my pocket?" "You accidentally dropped it in taking out your purse, and I instantly covered it with my foot. The person of whom you bought the lottery ticket was in concert with me. He caused you to draw it from a box where there was no blank, and the key had been in the snuff-box long before it came into your possession." "It is almost incomprehensible—And the monk who stopped me in my way, and addressed me in a manner so solemn—" "Was the same that I hear has been wounded in the chimney. He is one of my accomplices, and under that disguise has rendered me many important services."

"But what purpose was this intended to answer?" "To render you thoughtful: to inspire you with such a train of ideas as should be favourable to the wonders I intended to make you believe." "The pantomimical dance, which ended in a manner so extraordinary, was at least none of your contrivance." "I had taught the girl who represented the queen. Her performance was the result of my instructions. I supposed your Highness would not be a little astonished to find yourself known in this place, and (I entreat your Highness's pardon) your

adventure with the Armenian gave room for me to hope that you were already disposed to reject natural interpretations, and to search for the marvellous."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Prince, at once angry and amazed, and casting upon me a significant look — "Indeed, I did not expect this.* But," continued he, after a long silence, "how did you produce the figure that appeared on the wall over the chimney?" "By means of a magic lantern that was fixed in the opposite window-shutter, in which you have, no doubt, observed an opening." "And how did it happen that none of us perceived the lantern?" asked Lord Seymour. "You remember, my Lord, that on your re-entering the room, it was darkened by a thick smoke of olive wood. I used likewise the precaution to place upright against the wall near the window the boards which had been taken up from the floor. By these means I prevented the shutter from coming immediately under your sight. Moreover, the lantern remained covered until you had taken your places, and until there was no further reason to apprehend any examination from the persons in the hall."

"As I looked out of the window in the other pavilion," said I, "I heard a noise like that of a person who was in the act of placing a ladder against the side of the house. Was it really so?" "Yes, my assistant stood upon this ladder to direct the magic-lantern." "The apparition," continued the Prince, "had really a superficial likeness to my deceased friend; and what was particularly striking, his hair, which was of a very light colour, was exactly imitated. Was this mere chance, or how did you come by such a resemblance?" "Your Highness must recollect, that you had at table a snuff-box laid by your plate, with an enamelled portrait of an officer in a French uniform.

* Nor in all probability did my readers. The circumstance of the crown deposited at the feet of the Prince, in a manner so unexpected and extraordinary, and the former prediction of the Armenian, seemed so naturally and so obviously to aim at the same object, that at the first reading of these memoirs, I immediately remembered the deceitful speech of the Witches in the play of Macbeth:

"All hail, Macbeth! had to thee, Thane of Glamis!
All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!"

When a particular idea has once entered the mind, it necessarily connects with itself every subsequent idea that seems to have the least affinity to it.

I asked whether you had any thing about you as a memorial of your friend. Your Highness answered in the affirmative. I conjectured it might be the box. I had attentively considered the picture during supper, and being very expert in drawing, and not less happy in taking likenesses, I had no difficulty in giving to my shade the superficial resemblance you have perceived, because the Marquis's features are very striking." "But the figure seemed to move?" "It appeared so; yet it was not the figure, but the smoke which received its light." "And the man who fell down in the chimney spoke for the apparition?" "He did." "But he could not hear your questions distinctly." "There was no occasion for it. Your Highness will recollect, that I ordered you all very strictly not to propose any question yourselves to the apparition. My enquiries and his answers were pre-concerted between us; and that no mistake might happen, I caused him to speak at long intervals, which he counted by the beating of a watch." "You ordered the inn-keeper carefully to extinguish every fire in the house. This was undoubtedly —" "To save the man from the danger of being smothered; because the chimneys in the house communicate with each other, and I did not think myself very secure from your retinue."

"How did it happen," asked Lord Seymour, "that your ghost appeared neither sooner nor later than you wished him?" "The ghost was in the room for some time before I called him; but while the room was lighted, the shade was too faint to be perceived. When the formula of the conjuration was finished, I caused the cover of the box, in which the spirit was burning, to drop down; the hall was darkened, and it was not till then that the figure on the wall could be distinctly seen, although it had been reflected there a considerable time before." "When the ghost appeared, we all felt an electrical stroke. How was that managed?" "You have discovered the machine under the altar. You have also seen, that I was standing upon a silk carpet. I ordered you to form a half moon around me, and to take hold of each other's hand. When the crisis approached, I gave a sign to one of you to seize me by the

hair. The silver crucifix was the conductor; and you felt the electrical shock when I touched it with my hand."

"You ordered Count O—— and myself," continued Lord Seymour, "to hold two naked swords across over your head, during the whole time of the conjuration; for what purpose?" "For no other than to engage your attention during the operation; because I distrusted you two the most. You remember, that I expressly commanded you to hold the swords one inch above my head; by confining you exactly to this distance, I prevented you from looking where I did not wish you. I had not then perceived my principal enemy."

"I own," said Lord Seymour, "you acted cautiously; but why were we obliged to appear undressed?" "Merely to give a greater solemnity to the scene, and to fill your imaginations with the idea of something extraordinary." "The second apparition prevented your ghost from speaking," said the Prince; "what should we have learned from him?" "Nearly the same as what you heard afterwards. It was not without design that I asked your Highness whether you had told me every thing that the deceased communicated to you, and whether you had made any further enquiries on this subject in his country? I thought this was necessary, in order to prevent the deposition of the ghost from being contradicted by facts that you were previously acquainted with. Knowing likewise that every man, especially in his youth, is liable to error, I enquired whether the life of your friend had been irreproachable, and on your answer I founded that of the ghost."

"Your explanation of this matter is in some measure satisfactory," said the Prince; "but there remains yet one material circumstance which I must insist upon being cleared up." "If it be in my power, and —" "I shall not listen to any conditions. Justice, into whose hands you are fallen, ought not, perhaps, to deal with you so delicately. Who was the man at whose feet we saw you fall? What do you know of him? How did you get acquainted with him? and what do you know of the second apparition?" "Your Highness ——" "Hesitate not a moment. Recollect that on looking at the Russian officer attentively, you

screamed aloud, and fell on your knees before him. What are we to understand by that?" "That man, my Prince——" He stopped, grew visibly pale and perplexed, and, looking around him with an awful trepidation—"Yes, your Highness," he continued, "that man is a terrible being." "What do you know of him? What connection have you with him? Do not conceal the truth from us." "I will not; but—I am not certain that he is not among us at this very moment?"

"Where? Who?" exclaimed we all together, looking fearfully about the room. "It is impossible." "That man, or whatever else he may be, is a being incomprehensible; all things seem possible for him to do." "Who is he? Whence does he come? Is he Armenian or Russian? Of the characters he assumes, which is his real one?" "He is not what he appears to be. There are few conditions or countries in which he has not worn the mask. No person knows who he is, whence he comes, or whither he goes. Some say he has been for a long time in Egypt, and that he has brought from thence, out of a catacomb, his occult sciences. Here we only know him by the name of the Incomprehensible. How old, for instance, do you think he is?" "To judge from his appearance, he can scarcely have passed forty." "And of what age do you suppose I am?" "Not far from fifty." "Well; and I must tell you, that I was but a boy of seventeen when my grandfather spoke to me of this extraordinary man, whom he had seen at Famagusta; at which time he appeared nearly of the same age as he does at present." "Impossible," said the Prince; "it is ridiculous, and incredible."

"By no means, sir. Were I not prevented by these fetters, I could produce vouchers that would readily confirm my assertion. There are several credible persons who remember having seen him, each at the same time, in different parts of the globe. No sword can wound—no poison hurt—no fire burn him—no vessel in which he embarks can be shipwrecked or sunk: time itself seems to have no influence over him; years do not affect his constitution, nor age whiten his hair. He was never seen

to take any food. He is a stranger to love. No sleep closes his eyes. Of the twenty-four hours in the day, there is only one which he cannot command, during which no person ever saw him, and during which he never was employed in any terrestrial occupation."

"And this hour is—"

"That of midnight. When the clock strikes twelve, he ceases to belong to the living. In whatever place he is, he must immediately be gone; whatever business he is engaged in, he must instantly leave it. That dreadful hour tears him from the arms of friendship, hurries him from the sacred altar, and would, even in the agonies of death, drag him from his bed. His haunt has never been discovered, nor his engagements at that hour known. No person ventures to interrogate, and still less to follow him. As the time approaches, his features are enveloped in the gloom of melancholy, and are so terrifying that no person has courage to look him in the face or to speak a word to him. However lively the conversation may have been, a dead silence immediately succeeds it, and all around him wait for his return in awful horror, without venturing to quit their seats, or to open the door through which he has passed."

"Does nothing extraordinary appear in his person when he returns?" "Nothing, except that he seems pale and languid, nearly in the state of a man who has just suffered a painful operation, or received disastrous intelligence. Some pretend to have seen drops of blood on his linen, but with what degree of veracity I cannot affirm." "Did no person ever attempt to conceal the approach of this hour from him, or endeavour to engage him in such diversions as might make him forget it?" "Once only, it is said, he passed the fatal hour. The company was numerous, and remained together until late at night. All the clocks and watches were purposely set wrong, and the warmth of conversation diverted his attention. When the moment arrived, he suddenly became silent and motionless; his limbs continued in the position in which this instant had arrested them; his eyes were fixed, his pulse ceased to beat; all the means employed to awake him proved fruitless, and this situation endured till the hour had

elapsed; he then revived on a sudden, and continued his speech from the same syllable that he was pronouncing at the moment of interruption. The general consternation discovered to him what had happened; and he declared, with an awful solemnity, that they ought to think themselves happy in having escaped with no other injury than fear. The same night he quitted for ever the place where this circumstance had occurred. The common opinion is, that during this mysterious hour he converses with his attendant spirits. Some even suppose him to be one of the departed, who is allowed to pass twenty-three hours of the day among the living, and that in the twenty-fourth his soul is obliged to return to the infernal regions to suffer its punishment. Some believe him to be the famous Apollonius of Tyana*, and others the disciple of St. John the Baptist, of whom it is said that he shall remain wandering on the earth until the day of judgment."

"A character so wonderful," replied the Prince, "cannot fail to give rise to extraordinary conjectures. But all this you profess to know only by hearsay; and yet his behaviour to you, and yours to him, seemed to indicate a more intimate acquaintance. Is it not founded upon some particular event, in which yourself have been concerned? Conceal nothing from us." The Sicilian remained silent, as if uncertain whether he should speak or not. "If it concern any thing," said the Prince. "that you do not

* Apollonius, a Pythagorean philosopher, was born at Tyana, in Cappadocia, about three or four years before the birth of Christ. At sixteen years of age he became a strict observer of Pythagorean rules, renouncing wine, women, and all sorts of flesh, not wearing shoes, letting his hair grow, and clothing himself with nothing but linen. He soon after set up for a reformer of mankind, and chose his habitation in the temple of *Æsculapius*, where he is said to have performed many miraculous cures. On his coming of age, he gave part of his wealth to his eldest brother, distributed another part to some poor relations, and kept very little for himself. There are numberless fabulous stories recounted of him. He went five years without speaking, and yet, during this time, he stopped many seditions in Cilicia and Pamphylia. He travelled, set up for a legislator, and gave out that he understood all languages without having ever learned them. He could tell the thoughts of men, and understood the oracles which birds delivered by their singing. The Heathens opposed the pretended miracles of this man to those of our Saviour, and gave the preference to this philosopher. After having for a long time imposed upon the world, and gained a great number of disciples, he died in a very advanced age about the end of the first century. His life, which is filled with absurdities, was written by Philostratus; and M. du Pin has published a confutation of Apollonius's life, in which he proves, that the miracles of this pretended philosopher carry strong marks of falsehood, and that there is not one which may not be ascribed to chance or artifice. Apollonius himself wrote some works which are now lost.

wish to publish, I promise you by my honour, and before these gentlemen, the most inviolable secrecy; but speak openly, and without reserve." "Could I hope," answered the prisoner at last, "that you would not produce these gentlemen as evidence against me, I would tell you a remarkable adventure of this Armenian, to which I myself was witness, and which will leave you no doubt of his supernatural powers. But I beg leave to conceal some names." "Cannot you do it without this condition?" "No, your Highness: there is a family concerned in it which I must respect." "Let us hear then."

"Above five years ago, being at Naples, where I practised my art with success, I became acquainted with a person of the name of Lorenzo del M——, chevalier of the order of St. Stephen; a young and rich nobleman of one of the first families in the kingdom, who loaded me with civilities, and seemed to have a great esteem for my occult science. He told me that the Marquis del M——, his father, was a zealous admirer of the cabbala*, and would think himself happy in having a philosopher like me (for such he was pleased to call me) under his roof. The Marquis resided in one of his country seats on the sea-shore, about seven miles from Naples; and there, almost entirely secluded from the world, he mourned the loss of a beloved son, of whom he had been deprived by a fatal and melancholy accident. The chevalier gave me to understand, that he and his family might perhaps have occasion to employ my secret arts in obtaining some very important intelligence, to procure which every natural means had been exhausted in vain. He added, with a very significant look, that he himself might at some future period consider me as

* Cabbala is properly a mysterious kind of science delivered by revelation to the ancient Jews, and transmitted by oral tradition to those of our times; serving for the interpretation of difficult passages in Scripture, and to discover future events by the combination of particular words, letters, and numbers. It is likewise termed the oral law. But Cabbala, among the Christians, is also applied to the use, or rather abuse, which visionaries and enthusiasts make of Scripture for discovering futurity, by the study and consideration of the combination of certain words, letters, and numbers in the sacred writings. All the words, terms, magic characters, or figures, with stones and talismans, numbers, letters, charms, &c. in magic operations, are comprised under this species of Cabbala; and the word is used for any kind of magic, on account of the resemblance this art bears to the Jewish Cabbala. The Jews, however, never use the word in any such sense, but always with the utmost respect and veneration.

the author of all his earthly happiness. I did not choose to press him for an explanation. The affair was as follows :—Lorenzo, being the youngest son of the Marquis, had been destined for the church. The family estates were to devolve to the eldest. Jeronymo, which was the name of the latter, had spent many years on his travels, and returned to his country about seven years prior to the event which I am about to relate, in order to celebrate his marriage with the only daughter of a neighbouring count. This marriage had been determined on by the parents during the infancy of the children, in order to unite the very large fortunes of the two houses. But though this agreement was made by the two families without consulting the hearts of the parties concerned, the latter had secretly entertained an affection for each other. Jeronymo del M—— and Antonia C—— had been always brought up together; and the little constraint imposed on two children, whom their parents were already accustomed to regard as united, soon produced between them a connection of the tenderest kind. The congeniality of their tempers cemented this intimacy, and in riper years it matured insensibly into love. An absence of four years, far from cooling this passion, had only served to inflame it; and Jeronymo returned to the arms of his intended bride as faithful and as ardent as if they had never been separated. The raptures occasioned by his return had not subsided, nor the preparations for the happy day discontinued, when Jeronymo disappeared. He used frequently to pass the afternoon in a summer-house which commanded a prospect of the sea, and was accustomed to take the diversion of sailing on the water. One day, when he was at his favourite retirement, it was observed that he remained a much longer time than usual without returning, and his friends began to be very uneasy on his account. Boats were despatched after him, vessels were sent to sea in quest of him—no person had seen him—none of his servants could have attended him, for none of them were absent—night came on, and he did not appear. The next morning dawned—the day passed—the evening succeeded—Jeronymo came not. Already had they begun to give themselves up to the most melancholy

conjectures, when the news arrived that an Algerine pirate had landed the preceding day on that coast, and carried off several of the inhabitants. Two galleys, ready equipped, were immediately ordered to sea. The old Marquis himself embarked in one of them, to attempt the deliverance of his son at the peril of his own life. On the third day they perceived the corsair. The wind was favourable — they were just about to overtake him, and even approached so near to him, that Lorenzo, who was in one of the galleys, fancied that he saw, upon the deck of the adversary's ship, a signal made by his brother — when a sudden storm separated the vessels. Hardly could the almost shipwrecked galleys sustain the fury of the tempest. The pirate, in the mean time, had disappeared, and the distressed state of the other vessels obliged them to put into Malta. The affliction of the family was beyond all bounds. The distracted old Marquis tore his grey hairs in the utmost violence of grief; and the life of the young Countess was despaired of.

“ Five years were consumed after this event in fruitless enquiries; diligent search was made all along the coast of Barbary; and immense sums were offered for the ransom of the young Marquis, but to no purpose. The only conjecture founded on probability was, that the same storm which had separated the galleys from the pirate had destroyed the latter vessel, and that the whole ship's company had perished in the waves. But this supposition, however probable, as it did not by any means amount to a certainty, could not authorise the family to renounce the hope that the absent Jeronymo might again appear. In case, however, that he did not, either the family's name must be suffered to perish, or the youngest son must relinquish the church, and enter into the rights of the eldest. Justice seemed to oppose the latter measure; and, on the other hand, the necessity of preserving the family from annihilation required that the scruple should not be carried too far. In the mean time, sorrow, added to the weight of age, was bringing the Marquis fast to his grave. Every unsuccessful attempt served to increase his distress, and diminish the hope of finding his lost son. He saw that his name

might be perpetuated by acting with a little injustice, in consenting to favour his younger son at the expense of the elder. The fulfilment of his agreement with Count C—— required only the change of a name ; for the object of the two families was equally accomplished, whether Antonia became the wife of Lorenzo or Jeronymo. The faint probability of the latter's appearing again weighed but little against the certain and pressing danger of the total extinction of the family ; and the old Marquis, who considered his dissolution fast approaching, ardently wished to die free from this inquietude. Lorenzo alone, who was to be principally benefited by this measure, opposed it with the greatest obstinacy. He resisted with equal firmness the allurements of an immense fortune, and the attractions of a beautiful and accomplished object ready to be delivered into his arms. He refused, on principles the most generous and conscientious, to invade the rights of a brother, who for any thing he knew might himself be in a capacity to resume them.

“ ‘ Is not the lot of my Jeronymo,’ said he, ‘ made sufficiently miserable by the horrors of a long captivity, without the aggravation of being deprived for ever of all that he holds most dear ? With what conscience could I supplicate Heaven for his return, when his wife is in my arms ? With what countenance could I meet him, if at last he should be restored to us by a miracle ? And even supposing that he is torn from us for ever, can we honour his memory better than by keeping constantly open the chasm which his death has caused in our circle ? Can we better show our respect to him than by sacrificing our dearest hopes upon his tomb, and keeping untouched, as a sacred deposit, what was peculiarly his own ? ’ But these arguments of fraternal delicacy could not reconcile the old Marquis to the idea of being obliged to witness the decay of a tree which nine centuries had beheld flourishing. All that Lorenzo could obtain was a delay of two years. During this period they continued their enquiries with the utmost diligence. Lorenzo himself made several voyages, and exposed his person to many dangers. No trouble, no ex-

pense, was spared to recover the lost Jeronymo. These two years, however, like those which preceded them, were consumed in vain."

"And Antonia," said the Prince,—“You tell us nothing of her. Could she so calmly submit to her fate? I cannot suppose it.”

“Antonia,” answered the Sicilian, “experienced the most violent struggle between duty and inclination, between dislike and admiration. The disinterested generosity of a brother affected her. She felt herself forced to esteem a person whom she could never love. Her heart, torn by contrary sentiments, felt the bitterest distress; but her repugnance to the chevalier seemed to increase in the same degree as his claims upon her esteem augmented. Lorenzo perceived with heartfelt sorrow the secret grief that consumed her youth. An unconquerable sympathy for her misfortune insensibly eradicated that indifference with which till then Lorenzo had been accustomed to consider her. But this delusive sentiment deceived him, and an ungovernable passion began rapidly to shake the steadiness of his virtue, which till then had been unequalled. He, however, still obeyed the dictates of generosity, though at the expense of his love. By his efforts alone was the unfortunate victim protected against the cruel and arbitrary proceedings of the rest of the family. But his endeavours were ineffectual. Every victory he gained over his passion rendered him more worthy of Antonia; and the disinterestedness with which he refused her, left her without an apology for resistance. Thus were affairs situated, when the chevalier engaged me to visit him at his father’s villa. The earnest recommendation of my patron procured me a reception which exceeded my most sanguine wishes. I must not forget to mention, that, by some remarkable operations, I had previously rendered my name famous in different lodges of free-masons. This circumstance perhaps contributed to strengthen the old Marquis’s confidence in me, and to heighten his expectations. I beg you will excuse me from describing particularly the lengths I went with him, or the means which I employed. You may form some judgment of them from what I have before confessed to you. Profit-

ing by the mystic books which I found in his very extensive library, I was soon able to speak to him in his own language, and to adorn my system of the invisible world with the most extraordinary inventions. He was therefore with so little difficulty induced to credit the fables I taught him, that in a short time he would have believed as implicitly in the secret commerce of philosophers and sylphs as in any article of the canon. The Marquis, being very religious, had acquired in the school of theology a facility of belief, which caused him at once to be fascinated with the stories I told him, and to put the most unreserved confidence in my character. At length I entangled him so completely in mystery, that he would no longer believe any thing that was natural. In short, I became the adored apostle of the house. The usual subject of my lectures was the exaltation of human nature, and the intercourse of men with superior things; the infallible Count Gabolis* was my oracle. Antonia, whose mind since the loss of her lover had been more occupied in the world of spirits than in that of nature, and who had a strong tincture of melancholy in her composition, caught every hint I gave her with a fearful satisfaction. Even the servants contrived to have some business in the room when I was speaking, and, seizing part of my conversation, formed from it mysterious presages.—Two months were passed in this manner at the Marquis's villa, when the chevalier one morning entered my apartment. His features had experienced a considerable alteration, and from his sorrowful countenance I suspected that something preyed upon his mind.—He threw himself upon a couch with every symptom of despair.

“ ‘ I am distracted, ruined,’ said he; ‘ I must, I cannot support it any longer.’ ‘ What is the matter with you, chevalier? What has befallen you?’ ‘ Oh! this terrible passion!’ said he, starting from his seat, and throwing himself into my arms. ‘ I have combated against it like a man, but can resist it no longer.’ ‘ And whose fault is it but your own, my dear chevalier? Are they not all willing to gratify this passion? Your father? Your relations?’ ‘ My father! my relations! What are they to me? I want

* A mystical work written in French by the Abbé de Villars.

not to be united to her by force. Have not I a rival? Alas! and what a rival! Perhaps a dead one! Oh! let me go, let me go to the end of the world; I must find my brother.' 'What! after so many unsuccessful attempts, have you still any hope?' 'Hope! Alas, no! It has long since been banished from my heart, but it has not from hers; of what consequence are my sentiments? Is it possible that I should be happy whilst there remains a gleam of hope in Antonia's breast. Two words, my friend, would end my torments, but in vain; my destiny must continue to be miserable, till eternity shall break its long silence, and the grave shall speak in my behalf.' 'Is it then a state of certainty that would render you happy?' 'Happy! Alas! I doubt whether I shall ever be happy again; but uncertainty is of all others the most dreadful affliction.'

"After a short interval of silence, he continued with an emotion less violent: — 'If he could see my torments! Surely a constancy which renders his brother miserable cannot add to his happiness! Can it be just, that the living should suffer so much for the sake of the dead; that I should fruitlessly pine for an object which Jeronymo can no longer enjoy? If he knew the pangs I suffer,' (said he, concealing his face while the tears streamed from his eyes,) 'perhaps he himself would conduct her to my arms.' 'But is there no possibility of gratifying your wishes?' He started! 'What do you say, my friend?' 'Less important occasions than the present,' said I, 'have disturbed the repose of the dead for the sake of the living; is not the terrestrial happiness of a man, of a brother —' 'The terrestrial happiness! Ah, my friend, I feel but too sensibly the force of your expression — my entire felicity!' 'And the tranquillity of a distressed family, are not these sufficient to justify such a measure? If any sublunary concern can authorise us to interrupt the peace of the blessed, to make use of a power —' 'For God's sake, my friend!' said he, interrupting me, 'no more of this — once, I avow it, I had such a thought; I think I mentioned it to you; but I have long since rejected it as horrid and abominable.'

"You will have conjectured already," continued the Sicilian, "to what this conversation led us; I endeavoured

to overcome the scruples of the chevalier, and at last succeeded.—We resolved to call the ghost of the deceased Jeronymo; I only stipulated for a delay of a fortnight, in order, as I pretended, to prepare, in a suitable manner, for an act so solemn.—The time being expired, and my machinery in readiness, I took advantage of a very gloomy day, when we were all assembled as usual, to communicate the affair to the family; and not only brought them to consent to it, but even to make it a subject of their own request.—The most difficult part of the task was to obtain the approbation of Antonia, whose presence was essential.—My endeavours were, however, greatly assisted by the melancholy turn of her mind, and perhaps still more so by a faint hope that Jeronymo might still be living, and therefore would not appear.—A want of confidence in the thing itself was the only obstacle which I had to remove.—Having obtained the consent of the family, the third day was fixed on for the operation; I prepared then for the solemn transaction, by mystical instruction, fasting, solitude, and prayers, which I ordered to be continued till late in the night.—Much use was also made of a certain musical instrument*, unknown till that time; and, in such cases, it has often been found very powerful.—The effect of these artifices was so much beyond my expectation, that the enthusiasm which on this occasion I was obliged to show, was infinitely heightened by that of my audience.—The long-expected moment at last arrived.”

“I guess,” said the Prince, “whom you are now going to introduce.—But go on, go on.” “Your Highness is mistaken.—The deception succeeded according to my wishes.” “How! Where then is the Armenian?” “Your Highness’s patience: he will appear but too soon. I omit the description of the juggling farce itself, as it would be too tedious to relate.—It is sufficient to say, that it answered my expectation; the old Marquis, the young Countess, her mother, Lorenzo, and several other persons of the family were present.—You will imagine, that during my long residence in the house I took all opportunities of gathering information respecting every thing that concerned the deceased.—Seve-

* The Æolian harp.

ral of his portraits enabled me to give the apparition a striking likeness ; and as I suffered the ghost to speak only by signs, that the sound of his voice might excite no suspicion, the departed Jeronymo appeared in the dress of a Moorish slave, with a deep wound in his neck. — You observe, that in this respect I was counteracting the general supposition that he had perished in the waves. I had reason to hope, that this unexpected circumstance would heighten the belief in the apparition itself ; for nothing appeared to me more dangerous than to be too natural."

"I think you judged well," said the Prince; "in whatever respects apparitions, the most probable is the least acceptable. If their communications are easily comprehended, we undervalue the chanhel by which they are obtained ; nay, we even suspect the reality of the miracle, if the discoveries which it brings to light are such as might easily have been imagined. — Why should we disturb the repose of a spirit, to inform us of nothing more than the ordinary powers of the intellect are capable of teaching us ? — But, on the other hand, if the intelligence which we receive be extraordinary and unexpected, it confirms, in some degree, the miracle by which it is obtained ; for who can doubt an operation to be supernatural, when its effect could not be produced by natural means ? I have interrupted you," added the Prince : "proceed in your narrative." "I asked the ghost, whether there was any thing in this world which he still considered as his own, and whether he had left any thing behind that was particularly dear to him ? The ghost thrice shook his head, and lifted up his hands towards heaven. Previous to his retiring, he dropped a ring from his finger, which was found on the floor after he had disappeared ; Antonia took it, and, looking at it attentively, she knew it to be the wedding-ring she had presented to her intended husband."

"The wedding-ring !" exclaimed the Prince, with surprise. "How did you get it ?" "Who ? — I ! — It was not the true one ! — I procured it. — It was only a counterfeit." "A counterfeit !" repeated the Prince. "But in order to counterfeit, you must have been in possession of the true one. How did you come at it ? Surely the

deceased never went without it." "That is true," replied the Sicilian, apparently confused. "But, from a description which was given me of the original wedding-ring —" "A description which was given you! by whom?" "Long before that time. It was a plain gold ring, and had, I believe, the name of the young Countess engraved on it. But you make me lose the connection."

"What happened farther?" said the Prince, with a very dissatisfied countenance. "The family fancied themselves convinced that Jeronymo was no more. From that very day they publicly announced his death, and went into mourning. The circumstance of the ring left no doubt even in the mind of Antonia, and added a considerable weight to the addresses of the chevalier. In the mean time, the violent impression which the young Countess had received from the sight of the apparition brought on her a disorder so dangerous, that the hopes of Lorenzo were very near being destroyed for ever. On her recovering, she insisted upon taking the veil; and it was only by the serious remonstrances of her confessor, in whom she placed an implicit confidence, that she was brought to abandon her project. At length, the united solicitations of the family, aided by the confessor, wrested from her the desired consent. The last day of mourning was fixed on for the day of marriage, and the old Marquis determined to add to the solemnity of the occasion, by resigning all his estates to his lawful heir. The day arrived, and Lorenzo received his trembling bride at the altar. In the evening, a splendid banquet was prepared for the guests, in a hall superbly illuminated. The most lively and delightful music contributed to increase the general joy of the assembly. The venerable Marquis wished all the world to participate in his felicity. The gates of the palace were thrown open, and every one that came in was joyfully welcomed. In the midst of the throng——"

The Sicilian paused — a trembling expectation suspended our breath. "In the midst of the throng," continued the prisoner, "appeared a Franciscan monk, to whom my attention was directed by a person who sat next to me at table. He was standing motionless like a marble

pillar. His shape was tall and thin ; his face pale and ghastly ; his aspect grave and mournful ; and his eyes were fixed on the new-married couple. The joy which beamed on the face of every one present, appeared not on his. His countenance never once varied. He seemed like a statue among living persons. Such an object, appearing amidst the general joy, struck me more forcibly from its contrast with every thing around me. It left on my mind so durable an impression, that from it alone I have been enabled (which would otherwise have been impossible) to recollect in the Russian officer the features of this Franciscan monk ; for without doubt you must have already conceived, that the person I have described was no other than your Armenian. I frequently attempted to withdraw my eyes from this figure, but they returned involuntarily, and found him always unaltered. I pointed him out to the person who sat nearest to me on the other side, and he did the same to the person next to him. In a few minutes, a general curiosity and astonishment pervaded the whole company. The conversation languished ; a general silence succeeded ; nor did the monk interrupt it. He continued motionless, and always the same ; his grave and mournful looks constantly fixed upon the new-married couple : — His appearance struck every one with terror. The young Countess alone, who found the transcript of her own sorrow in the face of the stranger, beheld with a sullen satisfaction the only object that seemed to sympathise in her sufferings. The crowd insensibly diminished, for it was past midnight. The music became faint and languid ; the tapers grew dim, and many of them went out. The conversation, declining by degrees, lost itself at last in secret murmurs, and the faintly illuminated hall was nearly deserted. The monk, in the mean time, continued motionless, his grave and mournful look still fixed on the new-married couple. The company at length rose from the table. The guests dispersed. The family assembled in a separate group, and the monk, though uninvited, continued near them. How it happened that no person spoke to him, I cannot conceive. The female friends now surrounded the trembling bride, who cast a

supplicating and distressed look on the awful stranger ; but he did not answer it. The gentlemen assembled in the same manner around the bridegroom. A solemn and anxious silence prevailed among them.

“ At length — ‘ How happy we are here together !’ said the old Marquis, who alone seemed not to behold the stranger, or at least seemed to behold him without dismay. — ‘ How happy we are here together ! and yet my son Jeronymo cannot be with us !’ ‘ Have you not invited him, and did not he answer your invitation ?’ asked the monk. It was the first time he had spoken. We looked at him alarmed. ‘ Alas ! he is gone to a place whence there is no return,’ answered the old man. ‘ Reverend father, you misunderstood me ; — my son Jeronymo is dead.’ ‘ Perhaps he only fears to appear in this company,’ replied the monk. ‘ Who knows how your son Jeronymo may be situated ? Let him now hear the voice which he heard the last. Desire your son Lorenzo to call him. ‘ What does he mean ?’ whispered the company one to another.

“ Lorenzo changed colour. My own hair almost stood erect on my head. In the mean time the monk approached a sideboard. He took a glass of wine, and bringing it to his lips, — ‘ To the memory of our dear Jeronymo,’ said he : ‘ every one who loved the deceased will follow my example.’ ‘ Wherever you come from, reverend father,’ exclaimed the old Marquis, ‘ you have pronounced a dearly beloved name, and you are welcome here ;’ then turning to us, he offered us full glasses — ‘ Come, my friends ! let us not be surpassed by a stranger. The memory of my son Jeronymo !’ Never, I believe, was any toast less heartily received. ‘ There is one glass left,’ said the Marquis. ‘ Why does my son Lorenzo refuse to pay this friendly tribute ?’ Lorenzo tremblingly received the glass from the hands of the monk, — tremblingly he put it to his lips. — ‘ My dearly beloved brother Jeronymo !’ The name trembled on his tongue, and, being seized with horror, he replaced the glass unemptied.

That is the voice of my murderer !’ exclaimed a terrible figure, which appeared instantaneously in the midst of us, covered with blood, and disfigured with horrible wounds.

“ But ask nothing further from me,” added the Sicilian, with every symptom of horror in his countenance. “ I lost my senses the moment I looked at this apparition. The same happened to every one present. When we recovered, the monk and the ghost had disappeared. Lorenzo was in the agonies of death. He was carried to bed in the most dreadful convulsions. No person attended him but his confessor and the sorrowful old Marquis, in whose presence he expired ; — the Marquis died a few weeks after him. Lorenzo’s secret is concealed in the bosom of the priest who received his last confession, and no person ever learned what it was. Soon after this event, a deep well was cleaned in the farm yard of the Marquis’s villa. It had been dis-used many years, and the mouth of it was almost closed up by shrubs and old trees. A skeleton was found among the rubbish. The house where this happened is now no more ; the family del M—— is extinct, and Antonia’s tomb may be seen in a convent not far from Salerno.”

Astonishment kept us silent. “ You see,” continued the Sicilian, “ how my acquaintance with the Russian officer, Armenian or Franciscan friar, has originated. Judge whether I had not cause to tremble at the sight of a being who has twice placed himself in my way in a manner so terrible.” “ I beg you will answer me one question more,” said the Prince, rising from his seat ; “ Have you been sincere in your account of the chevalier ? ” “ Yes, your Highness, to the best of my knowledge.” “ You really believe him to be an honest man ? ” “ I do, by heaven ! I believe him to be an honest man.” “ Even at the time that he gave you the ring ? ” “ How ! he gave me no ring. I did not say that he gave me the ring.”

“ Very well ! ” said the Prince, pulling the bell, and preparing to depart. “ And you believe ” (going back to the prisoner) “ that the ghost of the Marquis de Lanoy, which the Russian officer introduced after your apparition, was a real ghost ? ” “ I cannot think otherwise.” “ Let us go ! ” said the Prince, addressing himself to us. The gaoler came in. “ We have done,” said the Prince to him. “ As for you,” turning to the prisoner, “ you shall hear farther from me.” “ I am tempted to ask your High-

ness the last question you proposed to the conjurer," said I to the Prince, when we were alone. "Do you believe the second ghost to have been a real one?" "I believe it! No, not now, most assuredly." "Not now? Then you did once believe it." "I confess I was tempted for a moment to believe it to have been something more than the contrivance of a juggler; and I could wish to see the man, who under similar circumstances would not have formed the same supposition." "But what reason have you for altering your opinion? What the prisoner has related of the Armenian, ought to increase rather than diminish your belief in his supernatural powers."

"What this wretch has related of him!" said the Prince, interrupting me very gravely. "I hope," continued he, "you have not now any doubt that we have had to do with a villain." "No; but must his evidence on that account—" "The evidence of a villain! Suppose I had no other reason for doubt, the evidence of such a person can be of no weight against common sense and established truth. Does a man who has already deceived me several times, and whose trade it is to deceive, does he deserve to be heard in a cause in which the unsupported testimony of even the most sincere adherent to truth could not be received? Ought we to believe a man who perhaps never once spoke truth for its own sake? Does such a man deserve credit, when he appears as evidence against human reason and the eternal laws of nature? Would it not be as absurd as to admit the accusation of a person notoriously infamous against unblemished and reproachless innocence?" "But what motives could he have for giving so great a character to a man whom he has so many reasons to hate?" "I am not to conclude that he can have no motives for doing this, because I am unable to comprehend them? Do I know who has bribed him to deceive me? I confess I cannot penetrate through the mystery of this plan; but he has certainly done a material injury to the cause he contends for, by showing himself at least an impostor, and perhaps something worse." "The circumstance of the ring, I allow, appears suspicious."

"It is more than suspicious; it is decisive. He received

this ring from the murderer. Let us even suppose the circumstances he has related are true; at the moment he received it, he must have been certain that it was from the perpetrator of the murder. Who but the assassin could have taken from Jeronymo's finger a ring, which he undoubtedly never was without? Throughout the whole of his narration, the Sicilian has laboured to persuade us, that while he was endeavouring to deceive Lorenzo, Lorenzo was in reality deceiving him. Would he have had recourse to this subterfuge, if he had not been sensible that he should lose much of our confidence, by confessing himself an accomplice with the assassin? The whole story is visibly nothing but a series of impostures, invented merely to connect the few truths he has thought proper to give us. Ought I then to hesitate in disbelieving the eleventh assertion of a person who has already deceived me ten times, rather than admit a violation of the fundamental laws of nature, which I have ever found in the most perfect harmony?" "I have nothing to reply to all this; but the apparition we saw is to me not the less incomprehensible." "It is also incomprehensible to me, although I have been tempted to find a key to it." "How?" "Do not you recollect that the second apparition, as soon as he entered, walked directly up to the altar, took the crucifix in his hand, and placed himself upon the carpet?" "It appeared so to me." "And this crucifix, according to the Sicilian's confession, was a conductor. You see, that the apparition hastened to make himself electrical. Thus the blow which Lord Seymour struck him with his sword, must of necessity be ineffectual, the electric stroke having disabled his arm." "That is true with respect to the sword. But the pistol fired by the Sicilian, the ball of which rolled slowly upon the altar—" "Are you convinced that this was the same ball which was fired from the pistol? Not to mention that the puppet, or the man who represented the ghost, may have been so well accoutred as to be invulnerable by swords or bullets; but consider who had loaded the pistols."

"True," said I; and a sudden light darted into my mind. "The Russian officer had loaded them, but it was

in our presence. How could he have deceived us?" "Why should he not have deceived us? Did you suspect him sufficiently to observe him? Did you examine the ball before it was put into the pistol? It may have been one of quicksilver or clay. Did you take notice whether the Russian officer really put it into the barrel, or dropped it into his other hand? But supposing that he actually loaded the pistols, how can you be sure that he did not leave them behind him, and take some unloaded ones into the room where the ghost appeared. He might very easily have exchanged them while we were undressing. No person ever thought of noticing him in particular. It is very possible, too, that the figure, at the moment when we were prevented from seeing it by the smoke of the pistol, might have dropped another ball on the altar. Which of these conjectures is impossible?" "Your Highness is right. But that striking resemblance to your deceased friend! I have often seen him with you, and I immediately recognised him in the apparition." "I did the same, and I must confess the illusion was complete; but as the juggler, from a few secret glances at the snuff-box, was able to give to his apparition such a likeness as deceived us both, what was to prevent the Russian officer (who had used the box during the whole time of supper, who had liberty to observe the picture unnoticed, and to whom I had discovered in confidence the person it represented) from doing the same? Add to this, what has been before observed by the Sicilian, that the prominent features of the Marquis were so striking as to be easily imitated. What now remains to be explained respecting the second ghost?" "The words he uttered, the information he gave you about your friend." "What! Did not the juggler assure us, that from the little which he had learned from me, he had composed a similar story? Does not this prove that the invention was obvious and natural? Beside, the answers of the ghost, like those of an oracle, were so obscure, that he was in no danger of being detected in a falsehood. If the man who personated the ghost possessed sagacity and presence of mind, and knew ever so little of the affairs on which he was consulted, to what length might he not have carried the deception?"

"I beg your Highness to consider, how much preparation such a complicated artifice would have required from the Armenian; what a time it requires to paint a face with sufficient exactness; what a time would have been requisite to instruct the pretended ghost, so as to guard him against gross errors; what a degree of minute attention to regulate every attendant or adventitious circumstance which might be useful or detrimental. And remember, that the Russian officer was absent but half an hour. Was that short space sufficient to make even such arrangements as were indispensably necessary? Surely not. Even a dramatic writer, who has the least desire to preserve the three unities of Aristotle, durst not venture to load the interval between one act and another with such a variety of actions, or to suppose in his audience such a facility of belief." "What! You think it absolutely impossible that every necessary preparation should have been made in the space of half an hour." "Indeed, I look upon it as almost impossible." "I do not understand this expression. Does it militate against the laws of time and space, or of matter and motion, that a man so ingenious and so expert as this Armenian must necessarily be, assisted by agents whose dexterity and acuteness are probably not inferior to his own, provided with such means and instruments as a man of this profession is never without; is it impossible that such a man, favoured by such circumstances, should effect so much in so short a time? Is it absurd to suppose, that by a very small number of words or signs, he can convey to his assistants very extensive commissions, and direct very complex operations? Nothing ought to be admitted against the established laws of nature, unless it is something with which these laws are absolutely incompatible. Would you rather give credit to a miracle than admit an improbability? Would you solve a difficulty rather by overturning the powers of nature, than by believing an artful and uncommon combination of them?"

"Though the fact will not justify a conclusion such as you have condemned, you must grant that it is far beyond our conception." "I am almost tempted to dispute even this," said the Prince, with a sarcastic smile. "What would you

say, my dear Count, if it should be proved, for instance, that the operations of the Armenian were prepared and carried on not only during the half hour that he was absent from us, not only in haste and incidentally, but during the whole evening and the whole night? You recollect that the Sicilian employed near three hours in preparation." "The Sicilian, your Highness!" "And how will you convince me that this juggler had not as much concern in the second apparition as in the first?" "How!" "That he was not the principal assistant of the Armenian; in a word, how will you convince me that they did not co-operate?" "It would be a difficult task to prove that they did," exclaimed I; with no little surprise.

"Not so difficult, my dear Count, as you imagine. What! could it have happened by mere chance that these two men should form a design so extraordinary and so complicated upon the same person, at the same time, and in the same place? Could mere chance have produced such an exact harmony between their operations, that one of them should appear as if subservient to the other? Suppose the Armenian has intended to heighten the effect of his deception, by introducing it after a less refined one; that he has created a Hector to make himself an Achilles. Suppose he has done all this, to see what degree of credulity he should find in me; to examine the avenues to my confidence; to familiarise himself with his subject by an attempt that might have miscarried without any prejudice to his plan; in a word, to try the instrument on which he intended to play. Suppose he has done this with a view to draw my attention on himself, in order to divert it from another object more important to his design. Lastly, suppose he wishes to have imputed to the juggler some indirect methods of information which himself has had occasion to practise."

"What do you mean?" "It is possible that he may have bribed some of my servants to give him secret intelligence, or perhaps some papers which may serve his purpose. One of my domestics has absconded. What reason have I to think that the Armenian is not concerned in his leaving me? Such a connection, however, if it exists, may be ac-

cidentally discovered ; a letter may be intercepted ; a servant who is in the secret may betray his trust. Now all the consequence of the Armenian is destroyed, if I detect the source of his omniscience ; he therefore introduces this juggler, who must be supposed to have the same or some other design upon me. He takes care to give me early notice of him and his intentions, so that whatever I may hereafter discover, my suspicions must necessarily rest upon the Sicilian. This is the puppet with which he amuses me, whilst he himself, unobserved and unsuspected, is entangling me in invisible snares." " We will allow this. But is it consistent with the Armenian's plan, that he himself should destroy the illusion which he has created, and disclose the mysteries of his science to the eyes of the profane ? "

" What mysteries does he disclose ? None, surely, which he intends to practise on me ; he therefore loses nothing by the discovery. But, on the other hand, what an advantage will he gain if this pretended victory over juggling and deception should render me secure and unsuspecting ; if he succeeds in diverting my attention from the right quarter (I mean himself), and in fixing my wavering suspicions on an object most remote from the real one. If at any time, either from my own doubts or at the suggestion of another, I should be tempted to seek in the occult sciences for a key to his mysterious wonders, how could he better provide against such an enquiry than by contrasting his prodigies with the tricks of the juggler ? By confining the latter within artificial limits, and by delivering, as it were, into my hands, a scale by which to appreciate them, he naturally exalts and perplexes my ideas of the former. How many suspicions does he preclude by this single contrivance ! How many methods of accounting for his miracles, which might afterwards have occurred to me, does he refute beforehand ! " " But in exposing such a finished deception, he has very much counteracted his own interest, both by quickening the penetration of those whom he meant to impose upon, and by staggering their belief of miracles in general. If he had had such a plan, your Highness's self is the best proof of its insufficiency."

“ Perhaps he has been mistaken in respect to myself, but his conclusions have nevertheless been well founded. Could he foresee that I should exactly notice the very circumstance which exposed the whole artifice? Was it in his plan, that the creature he employed should be so communicative? Are we certain that the Sicilian has not far exceeded his commission? He has undoubtedly done so with respect to the ring, and yet it is chiefly this single circumstance which determined my distrust in him. A plan whose contexture is so artful and refined, is easily spoiled in the execution by an awkward instrument. It certainly was not the Armenian’s intention that the juggler should speak to us in the style of a mountebank, that he should endeavour to impose upon us such fables as are too gross to bear the least reflection. For instance, with what countenance could this impostor affirm, that the miraculous being he spoke of, renounces all commerce with mankind at twelve in the night? Did not we see him among us at that very hour?” “ That is true. He must have forgotten it.” “ People of this description naturally overact their parts : and, by exceeding every limit of credibility, mar the effects which a well-managed deception is calculated to produce.” “ I cannot, however, yet prevail on myself to look upon the whole as a mere contrivance of art. What ! the Sicilian’s terror, his convulsive fits, his sword, the deplorable situation in which we saw him, and which was even such as to move our pity ; were all these nothing more than the mimicry of an actor? I allow that a skilful performer may carry imitation to a very high pitch, but he certainly has no power over the organs of life.” “ As for that, my friend, I have seen the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard the Third. But were we at that moment sufficiently cool to be capable of observing dispassionately? Could we judge of the emotions of the Sicilian, when we were almost overcome by our own? Besides, the decisive crisis, even of a deception, is so momentous to the deceiver himself, that excessive anxiety may produce in him symptoms as violent as those which surprise excites in the deceived. Add to this, the unexpected entrance of the watch.” “ I am glad your Highness mentions that. Would the Armenian have ventured to

discover such an infamous scheme to the eye of justice, to expose the fidelity of his creature to such a dangerous test? And for what purpose?" "Leave that matter to him; he is no doubt acquainted with the people he employs. Do we know what secret crimes may have secured him the discretion of this man? You have been informed of the office he holds at Venice; what difficulty will he find in saving a man, of whom himself is the only accuser?"

This suggestion of the Prince was but too well justified by the event. For, some days after, on enquiring about the prisoner, we were told that he had escaped, and had not since been heard of. "You ask what could be his motives for delivering this man into the hands of justice?" continued the Prince. "By what other method, except this violent one, could he have wrested from the Sicilian such an infamous and improbable confession, which, however, was material to the success of his plan? Who but a man whose case is desperate, and who has nothing to lose, would consent to give so humiliating an account of himself? Under what other circumstances than such as these could we have believed such a confession." "I grant your Highness all this. The two apparitions were mere contrivances of art: the Sicilian has imposed upon us a tale which the Armenian his master had previously taught him: the efforts of both have been directed to the same end; and by this mutual intelligence all the wonderful incidents that have astonished us in this adventure may be easily explained. But the prophecy of the square of St. Mark, that first miracle, which as it were opened the door to all the rest, remains still unexplained; and of what use is the key to all his other wonders, if we must despair of resolving this single one?"

"Rather invert the proposition, my dear Count, and say, what do all these wonders prove, if I can demonstrate that a single one among them is a manifest deception? The prediction, I allow, is above my conception. If it had stopped there, if the Armenian had closed the scene with it, I confess, I do not know how far I might have been carried. But in the base alloy with which it is mixed,

it is certainly suspicious." "Gracious Sir, I grant it; but it still remains incomprehensible, and I defy all our philosophy to explain it." "But," continued the Prince, "can it be really so inexplicable?" After a few moments' reflection—"I am far from pretending to the title of a philosopher, and yet I am almost tempted to account for this miracle in a natural way, or at least to deprive it entirely of any extraordinary appearance." "If your Highness can do that," replied I, with a very unbelieving smile, "you will be the only wonder in which I have any faith." "As a proof," continued he, "how little we are justified in flying to supernatural powers for an explanation, I will point out to you two different ways by which we may perhaps account for this event, without doing any violence to nature." "Two ways at once! You do indeed raise my expectations."

"You have read, as well as I, the last accounts of my late cousin's illness. He died of an apoplexy. It was an attack during a fit of the ague. The extraordinariness of his death, I confess it, induced me to ask the opinions of some physicians upon the subject, and the knowledge which I acquired from that circumstance gives me a clue to this enchantment. The disorder of my deceased relative, which was one of a most uncommon and alarming nature, had this peculiar symptom, that during the fit of the ague it threw the patient into a deep and irrecoverable sleep, which naturally put an end to his existence on the return of the apoplectic paroxysm. As these paroxysms return in the most regular order, and at an appointed hour, the physician is enabled, from the very moment in which he forms his opinion on the nature of the disorder, to predict the hour of the patient's decease. The third paroxysm of a tertian ague will fall to a certainty on the fifth day after the appearance of the illness. Let us suppose then that our Armenian possesses a vigilant correspondent among the attendants of the deceased; that he was very much interested to gain information from thence; that he had views upon my person, to the prosecution of which my belief in the wonderful and the appearance of supernatural

powers would greatly conduce—thus you have a natural clue to this prediction, which is so inconceivable to you. This is sufficient, for you may hence see the possibility of a third person's informing another of a death which happened at the moment when he announced it, in a place at forty miles' distance."

"In truth your Highness in this instance combines things together, which, taken singly, appear very natural, but which could only be brought together by something that is not much better than enchantment." "What! Do you then fear a wonder less than an uncommon plan? As soon as we allow that the Armenian is engaged in a plan of consequence, of which my destruction is either the end, or at least conducive to it, (and may we not form that opinion of him with which his appearance first inspired us?) nothing will seem unnatural or forced, which could bring his scheme to a conclusion in the most expeditious manner. But what way could he devise more expeditious, than the securing his object by putting on the appearance of a miracle-worker? Who can resist a man to whom the spirits are obedient? However, I grant you that my conjectures are not perfectly natural; I confess that I am not even myself satisfied with them. I do not insist upon it, because I do not think it worth my while to call in to my assistance a well-formed and deliberate design, when it may at last turn out to be a mere accident." "What!" replied I; "may it be a mere accident?" "Certainly, nothing more!" continued the Prince. "The Armenian was aware of the danger of my cousin. He met us in the place of St. Mark. The opportunity invited him to hazard a prophecy, which, if it failed, would be nothing more than a loose word—but if it succeeded, might be of the greatest consequence. The event was favourable to this attempt—and he might still design to make use of the gift of prophecy for the connection of his plan—time will disclose this secret, or bury it in oblivion. But believe me, friend," (and he laid his hand upon mine, with a very earnest countenance,) "a man, to whose word the higher powers are obedient, will either not want the assistance of deception, or at least will despise it."

Thus ended a conversation which I have faithfully related, because it shows the difficulties which were to be overcome before the Prince could be effectually imposed upon. I hope it may free his memory from the imputation of having blindly and inconsiderately thrown himself into a snare which was spread for his destruction by the most unexampled and diabolical iniquity. Many, at the moment I am writing this, are, perhaps, smiling contemptuously at the Prince's credulity; but not all those who, in the fancied superiority of their own understanding, think themselves entitled to condemn him—not all those, I apprehend, would have resisted this first attempt with so much firmness. If afterwards, notwithstanding this happy prepossession, we witness his downfall; if we see that the black design against which, at its very opening, he was thus providentially warned, is finally successful, we shall not be so much inclined to ridicule his weakness, as to be astonished at the infamous ingenuity of a plot which could seduce an understanding so admirably prepared. Considerations of interest have no influence in my testimony. He, who alone would be thankful for it, is now no more. His dreadful destiny is accomplished. His soul has long since been purified before the throne of truth, where mine must likewise shortly appear. Pardon the involuntary tears which now flow at the remembrance of my deceased friend. But for the sake of justice I write this history. He was a great character, and would have adorned a throne which, seduced by the most atrocious artifice, he attempted to ascend by the commission of a murder.

Not long after these events, I began to observe an extraordinary alteration in the disposition of the Prince, which was partly the immediate consequence of the last event, and partly produced by the concurrence of many adventitious circumstances; for hitherto the Prince had avoided every severe trial of his faith, and contented himself with purifying the rude and unabstracted notions of religion in which he had been educated, by those more rational ideas upon the subject which obtruded themselves upon him, and by comparing the discordant opinions with each other, rather than by enquiring into the foundations of his faith. The

mystery of religion, he has many times confessed to me, always appeared to him like an enchanted castle, into which one does not set one's foot without horror; and that we act a much wiser part if for that reason we pass it with a willing resignation, without exposing ourselves to the danger of being bewildered in its labyrinths. Nevertheless, a contrary propensity irresistibly impelled him to those researches which were connected with it. A servile and bigoted education was the cause of this bias: this had impressed frightful images upon his tender brain, which he was never able perfectly to obliterate during his whole life. Religious melancholy was an hereditary disorder in his family. The education which he and his brothers received was actuated by this principle; the men to whose care they were entrusted, selected with this view, were also either enthusiasts or hypocrites, whose only method of securing to themselves the approbation of his noble parents, was by stifling all the sprightliness of the boy by a gloomy restraint of his mental faculties.

Such was the dark and gloomy aspect which the whole of our Prince's childhood wore. Mirth was banished even from his amusements. All his ideas of religion were accompanied by some frightful image, and the representations of terror and severity were those which first possessed themselves of his lively imagination, and which also the longest retained their empire over it. His God was an object of terror, a being whose sole occupation is the chastisement of his creatures; the adoration which he paid to him a blind submission, stifling all his courage and vigour. In all his infantine or youthful propensities, which a stout body and blooming constitution naturally excited to break out with greater violence, Religion stood in his way; she opposed every thing upon which his youthful heart was bent: he learned to consider her not as a friend, but as the scourge of his passions; so that a silent indignation was continually kindled against her in his heart, which, together with a revering faith and a blind dread, made both in his heart and head the strangest mixture — an abhorrence of the Lord before whom he trembled. It is no wonder, therefore, that he took the first opportunity of escaping from so galling a

yoke — but he fled from it as a bond-slave from his rigorous master, who even in the midst of freedom drags along with him a sense of his servitude ; for, as he did not renounce the faith of his earlier years from a deliberate conviction — as he did not wait till the maturity and improvement of his reason had weaned him from it — as he had escaped from it like a fugitive, upon whose person the rights of his master are still in force, so was he obliged, even after his widest separation, to return to it at last. He had escaped with his chain ; and must necessarily become the prey of any one who should discover it, and know how to make use of the discovery. That he considered himself in such a light, though the reader may not yet have supposed so, the sequel of this history will prove.

The confessions of the Sicilian left impressed upon his mind more important conclusions than the whole of the circumstance deserved ; and the small victory which his reason had thence gained over this weak imposture, remarkably increased his reliance upon it. The facility with which he had been able to unravel this deception, appeared to have perfectly overwhelmed him. Truth and error were not yet so accurately distinguished from each other in his mind, but that he often happened to mistake the arguments which were in favour of the one for those which were in favour of the other. Thence it arose, that the same blow which urged his faith to credulity, made the whole edifice of it totter. In this instance he fell into the same error as an unexperienced man who has been deceived in love or friendship because he made a bad choice, and who drops all credit in these sensations, because he takes mere incidental circumstances for their actual distinguishing features. The unmasking of a deception made even truth suspicious to him, because he had unfortunately discovered the truth on very weak grounds. This imaginary triumph pleased him in proportion to the magnitude of the oppression from which it seemed to have delivered him. From this instant there arose in his mind a scepticism which did not spare even the most venerable objects. Many circumstances concurred to encourage him in this turn of mind, and still more to confirm him in it.

He now quitted the retirement in which he had hitherto lived, and was obliged to give way to a more dissipated mode of life. His rank was discovered. Attentions which he was obliged to return, etiquettes for which he was indebted to his rank, drew him imperceptibly within the vortex of the great world. His rank, as well as his personal attractions, opened to him the circles of all the *beaux esprits* in Venice, and he soon found himself on terms of intimacy with the most enlightened persons in the republic, the men of learning as well as politicians. This obliged him to enlarge the uniform and narrow circle to which his understanding had hitherto been confined. He began to perceive the poverty and debility of his ideas, and to feel the want of more elevated impressions. The old-fashioned dress of his understanding, spite of the many advantages with which it was accompanied, formed an unpleasant contrast with the current ideas of society; his ignorance of the commonest things frequently exposed him to ridicule, and nothing did he dread so much as that. The veneration for high birth entertained in his native country, appeared to him a challenge to overcome it in his own person. Thence arose a peculiarity in his character; he was offended with every attention that he thought he owed to his rank, and not to his natural good qualities. He felt this humiliation principally in the company of persons who shone by their abilities, and triumphed, as it were, over their birth by their merit. To perceive himself distinguished as a prince in such a society, was always a base humiliation to him, because he unfortunately conceived that by that title he was totally excluded from all competition. All these circumstances together convinced him of the necessity for the formation of his mind, which he had hitherto neglected, in order to raise it to a level with the thinking part of the world, from which he had remained so far remote; and for that purpose he chose the most fashionable books, to which he now applied himself with all the ardour with which he was accustomed to pursue every object he pitched upon. But the unskilful hand that directed his choice always prompted him to select such as were little calculated for the improvement either of his heart or his reason. And, even

in this instance, he was influenced by that propensity which rendered the charms of every thing incomprehensible and irresistible. He had neither attention nor memory for any thing that was not connected with this : his reason and his heart remained empty, while he was filling the vacuities in his brain with confused ideas. The dazzling style of the one captivated his imagination, while the subtlety of the other ensnared his reason. They were both able easily to possess themselves of a mind which became the prey of any one who obtruded himself upon it with a good assurance. A course of reading, which had been continued with ardour for more than a year, had scarcely enriched him with one benevolent idea ; but filled his head with doubts, which, as a natural consequence with such a character, had almost found an unfortunate road to his heart. In a word, he had entered this labyrinth as a credulous enthusiast, had left it as a sceptic, and was at length become a perfect free-thinker.

Among the many circles into which they had introduced him, there was a private society called the Bucentauro, which, under the external show of a noble and rational liberality of sentiment, encouraged the most unbridled licentiousness of manners and opinions. As they enumerated many of the clergy among their members, and could even boast of some cardinals at their head, the Prince was the more easily induced to be admitted into it. He thought that certain dangerous truths, which reason discovers, could be no where better preserved than in the hands of such persons, whose rank confined them to moderation, and who had had the advantage of hearing and examining the other side of the question ; but the Prince did not recollect that licentiousness of sentiment and manners takes so much the stronger hold among persons of this rank, inasmuch as they for that reason feel one curb less. This was the case with the Bucentauro ; most of whose members, through an execrable philosophy, and manners worthy of such a guide, were not only a disgrace to their own rank, but even to human nature itself. The society had its secret degrees ; and I will believe, for the credit of the Prince, that they never thought him worthy of admission into the inmost

sanctuary. Every one who entered this society was obliged, at least so long as he continued to be a member of it, to lay aside all distinctions arising from rank, nation, or religion; in short, every general mark or distinction whatever, and to submit himself to the condition of universal equality. To be elected a member was, indeed, a difficult matter, as superiority of understanding alone paved the way to it. The society boasted of the highest *ton* and the most cultivated taste, and such indeed was its fame throughout all Venice. This, as well as the appearance of equality which predominated in it, attracted the Prince irresistibly. Sensible conversations, set off by the most admirable humour, instructive amusements, and the flower of the learned and political world, which were all attracted to this point as to their common centre, concealed from him for a long time the danger of this connection. Though he had by degrees discovered, through its mask, the spirit of the institution, as they were tired of being any longer on their guard before him, to recede was dangerous, and false shame and anxiety for his safety obliged him to conceal the displeasure which he felt. But he already began, merely from familiarity with men of this class and their sentiments, though they did not excite him to imitation, to lose the pure and charming simplicity of his character, and the delicacy of his moral feelings. His understanding, so little supported by any real knowledge, could not, without foreign assistance, solve the fallacious sophisms with which he had been here ensnared; and this fatal corroder had consumed all, or nearly all, on which his morality rested. He gave away the natural and necessary supports of his happiness for sophisms which deserted him at a critical moment, and consequently obliged him to abide by the best decision which should first offer itself.

Perhaps it was yet left to the hand of a friend to extricate him at a proper opportunity from this abyss; but, besides that I did not become acquainted with the interior of the Bucentauro till long after the evil had taken place, an urgent circumstance called me away from Venice just at the beginning of this period. Moreover, Lord Seymour, a valuable acquaintance of the Prince's, whose under-

standing was proof against every species of deception, and who would infallibly have been a secure support to him, left us at this time in order to return to his native country. Those in whose hands I left the Prince were very worthy men, but inexperienced, excessively narrow in their religious opinions, and as much deficient in insight into the evil as in credit with the Prince. They had nothing to oppose to his captious sophisms, except the maxims of a blind and unenquiring faith, which either irritated him or excited his ridicule. He saw through them too easily, and his superior reason soon silenced those weak defenders of the good cause, which will be clearly evinced from an instance that I shall introduce in the sequel. The others, who, subsequent to this, possessed themselves of his confidence, were much more occupied in plunging him deeper into it. When I returned to Venice in the following year, a change had taken place in every thing.

The influence of this new philosophy soon showed itself in the Prince's conduct. The more he openly pursued pleasure, and formed new friendships, the more did he desert his old ones. He pleased me less and less every day; we saw each other seldom, and indeed he was seldom to be found. He had launched out into the torrent of the great world. His threshold was never clear when he was at home. One amusement introduced another — one banquet another — and one pleasure was succeeded by a second. He was the beauty whom every one adored — the king and idol of every circle. As often as he reflected on the former quietness of his retired life, amidst the bustle of the world, so often did he find more reason for astonishment. Every thing met his wishes; — whatever he uttered was admirable, and when he remained silent, it was committing a robbery upon the company. They understood the art of almost banishing reflection from his soul by an agreeable thoughtlessness, and through a delicate assistance to overwhelm him with it. This happiness, which accompanied him every where, and this universal success, raised him indeed too much in his own ideas, because it gave him reliance upon and confidence in himself.

The high opinion which he thence acquired of his own

worth, made him credit the excessive and almost idolatrous adoration that was paid to his understanding ; which, without this augmented and somewhat just self-complacency, must have necessarily recalled him to his senses. For the present, however, this universal voice was only the confirmation of that which his complacent vanity whispered to him in private — a tribute which he was entitled to by right. He would have infallibly disengaged himself from this snare, had they allowed him to take breath — had they granted him a moment of uninterrupted leisure for comparing his real merit with the picture that was exhibited to him in this seducing mirror ; but his existence was a continued state of intoxication, of a staggering dizziness. The higher he had been elevated, the more difficulty had he to support himself in his elevation. This incessant exertion slowly undermined him, — rest had forsaken even his slumbers. They had discovered his weakness, and turned to good account the passion which they had kindled in his breast.

His worthy attendants soon suffered for the *spirit* of their lord. That anxious sensibility, those glorious truths which his heart once embraced with the greatest enthusiasm, now began to be the objects of his ridicule. He revenged himself on the great truths of religion for the oppression which he had so long suffered from misconception. But, since from too true a voice his heart combated the intoxication of his head, there was more of acrimony than of humour in his jokes. His disposition began to alter, and caprice to make its appearance. The most beautiful ornament of his character, his moderation, vanished, — parasites had poisoned his excellent heart. That tender delicacy of address which frequently made his attendants forget that he was their lord, was now obliged not seldom to give place to a decisive and despotic tone, that made the more sensible impression because it was not founded upon the external distinction of birth, for the want of which they could have more easily consoled themselves, and which he himself esteemed less ; but upon an injurious estimation of his own individual merit : since, when at home, he was attacked by reflections that seldom

made their appearance in the bustle of company ; his own people seldom beheld him otherwise than gloomy, peevish, and unhappy, whilst a forced vivacity made him the soul of every circle. With the sincerest sorrow did we behold him treading this dangerous path. In the tumult in which he was involved, the feeble voice of friendship was no longer heard, and he was yet too much intoxicated to understand it.

Just at the beginning of this epoch an affair of the greatest consequence required my presence in the court of my sovereign, and which I dared not postpone even for the dearest interests of friendship. *An invisible hand, which I did not discover till long after that period, had contrived to derange my affairs there, and to spread reports which I was obliged to hasten to contradict by my presence. My absence from the Prince was as painful to me as it was pleasing to him. The ties which united us had now been severed for some time ; but his fate had awakened all my anxiety : I on that account made the Baron de F—— promise to inform me in his letters of every event, which he has done in the most conscientious manner. As I was now for a considerable time no longer an eye-witness of these events, it will be allowable for me to introduce the Baron de F—— in my stead, and to fill up the gap in my narrative by the contents of his letters, though the representation of my friend F—— is not always that which I should have given. I would not, however, alter any of his expressions, by which the reader will be enabled to discover the truth with very little trouble.

Baron F—— to the Count O-

I thank you, my beloved friend, that you have given me permission to continue with you, even in your absence, the conversation of friendship, which, during your stay here, was my greatest pleasure. There is not any person here with whom I could venture to converse, as you are well aware, on account of private transactions ; and, independent of that, I despise the character of the people. Since the Prince became a member of their society, and from the

moment that you were torn from us, I have been friendless in the midst of this populous city.

Z—— takes it in an easier manner ; for, encircled by the fair ones at Venice, he learns to forget the sorrows which he is obliged to share with me when at home. And why should he perplex himself ? He desires nothing from the Prince but that which a master would bestow ; but I, you know, place him nearer to my heart, and think I can never be too solicitous about his welfare and happiness ; and, indeed, I have reason for it. I have now lived with him sixteen years, and exist only for him. At the age of nine years I entered into his service, and since that time I have never been separated from him. I have grown up under his patronage, shared with him his pleasures and misfortunes, and time has converted respect into a sincere attachment. Until now I looked upon him as my friend and brother ; we basked in the sunbeam of happiness, interrupted by the clouds of misery.

Since you have left us, considerable alterations have taken place. The Prince —— de —— arrived here last week with a great retinue, and has corrupted our circle of acquaintance with ideas of a tumultuous life. As he and our Prince are so nearly related, and live at present upon good terms, I suspect they will not separate from one another during his stay here, which will last, as I have heard, till the Ascension. His *début* has already attracted notice ; and for ten days the Prince has been in the midst of gaiety. The style in which the Prince —— de —— has begun his career may be justified upon the ground that his stay here will not be long ; but the first part of the business is, that he has induced our Prince to partake of those insidious pleasures, knowing that he could not easily deny him his request, on account of the peculiar connection which exists between their houses ; added to this, in a few weeks we must depart from Venice, when he will be obliged to abandon this extraordinary and insufferable mockery of happiness, and which, perhaps, may make a serious impression on his mind.

The Prince —— de ——, it is reported, is here on the business of the order of ——. That he has taken advan-

tage of all the acquaintances of our Prince you may easily imagine. He was received into the Bucentauro with great splendour, and pleased himself with the idea that he was characterised as a wit, and one of great spirit ; and he has called himself in his correspondence (which he maintains in all parts of the world) the *philosophical Prince*. I know not whether you have ever had the fortune to see him personally. He displays a promising exterior, piercing eyes, and a countenance full of expression. Polite, and unaffected, he entertains (pardon me this expression) a princely respect for the feelings of his inferiors, but at the same time puts great confidence in himself. Who could refuse to pay adoration to so princely a character ? and how such a solitary Prince as ours will appear in opposition to such dazzling accomplishments, time itself must discover. In the arrangement of our affairs, many and great changes have taken place. We possess a new and magnificent house opposite the new Procuracy, because the lodgings at the Moor Hotel were too small for the Prince. Our household has been augmented by twelve persons. Pages, moors, body-guards, &c. grace our retinue. You complained during your stay here of extravagance ; you should be here now to witness the present system. Our internal arrangements are still the same ; only that the Prince, who no longer respects the advice of those he once loved, is become more reserved and cold towards us, and that we very seldom see him or are in his company, except in the hours employed in dressing and undressing him. Under the pretext that we speak the French language very badly, and the Italiau not at all, he excludes us from his presence, which would not affect me in any great degree, but that I believe, to speak the truth, he is ashamed of us ; and that circumstance displeases me, because I am confident we have not deserved such treatment.

Of all our people (as you wish to know the minutiae) he seems most attached to Biondello, whom he took into his service, as you must remember, when he could not discover the retreat of his former servant from Bremen, and who has become, by this new manner of life, quite a necessary being. This man knows how every thing is going on at Venice, and he employs his time to some pur-

pose. He is as if he had a thousand eyes and a thousand hands to set in motion at once. He contrives all plans, and gains the greater part of his knowledge, as he says, by the help of the gondoliers; for that reason, he has become a great acquisition to the Prince. He makes him acquainted with every new face whom the Prince has met in his societies; and the secret information which he gives his Highness has always been found correct. Beside this, he reads and writes the Italian and French in an excellent style, by which means he has already become the Prince's secretary. I must relate to you a trait of fidelity in him, which is indeed very rare to be found in men of his station. Not long ago a merchant of great consequence from Rimini begged to be admitted to the Prince. The matter concerned a particular complaint against Biondello. The Procurator, his former master, who must have been an odd fellow, had for some time lived upon bad terms with his relations. Biondello possessed his confidence, and to him he intrusted all his secrets. As he was upon his death-bed, he made him swear never to disclose them to any one, that his relations might not be benefited by them, and gave him, as a reward, a great legacy.

When the will was opened, and his papers inspected, there were found considerable numbers of blanks, to which Biondello alone could furnish the key. He denied that he knew any thing of the matter, gave up to the relations his legacy, and persevered in his fidelity to the injunctions of his deceased master. Great offers were made to him by the relations, but all to no purpose; at last he eluded their threats of forcing him to confession, by entering into the service of the Prince. This merchant, who was the heir at law, addressed himself to the Prince, and made still greater offers to Biondello if he would discover the secret—but it was all in vain. The Prince interfered, but he remained firm. He confessed, however, to his Highness, that secrets of great importance were confided to him, and he did not deny that the deceased might have acted with too much severity towards his relations; but he added, "he was my good master and benefactor, and with the firmest confidence in my sincerity he died. I was the only friend he left in the world—as such I will never betray

my trust, nor act in contradiction to his dying request." In the mean time he gave a hint, that a discovery would not add to the honour of his deceased master. Was not such conduct worthy to be imitated? You may easily imagine that the Prince did not insist upon his violating his vow of fidelity. This extraordinary attachment which he showed for the deceased gained him the most unlimited confidence of his royal master.

Happiness attend you, my dear friend. I look back upon our former manner of life with secret pleasure, to which you have contributed in a high degree. I fear we shall never more enjoy those tranquil hours at Venice which we were wont formerly to do, and am much mistaken if the Prince is not of the same way of thinking. The element in which he lives at present is not that in which he can be happy in future, or an experience of sixteen years deceives me. Farewell!

The same to the same.

May 15.

I had no idea that our stay at Venice would prove so satisfactory as it has done. He has saved the life of a man — I am reconciled to him. The Prince not long ago suffered himself to be carried home in a chair from the Buccentauro; and two footmen, with Biondello, conducted him. I know not how it happened, but the chair, which had been hired in haste, broke, and the Prince was obliged to walk on foot the remainder of the way. Biondello went before. The way lay through several dark streets; and as it was not far from day-break, some of the lamps burnt but faintly, while the others were totally extinguished. They had been walking a quarter of an hour, when Biondello discovered that he had taken the wrong road. The similarity of the bridges had deceived him, and instead of crossing that of St. Mark, they found themselves in *Sestiere di Castello*. It was in one of the by-streets, and not a soul stirring near the spot. They were obliged to turn back to gain, as the best way, one of the principal streets. They had walked but a few steps, when in an adjoining street they distinctly heard the cry of "Murder!" The Prince, unarmed as he was, snatched from one of the ser-

wants a stick ; and with his usual courage, which you have often witnessed, ran towards the place whence the voice issued. Three ruffianlike fellows were just on the point of vanquishing a person, who, with his servant, was defending himself, apparently overcome by fatigue, when the Prince appeared, and prevented the villains from murdering him. His voice, and those of his servants, startled the murderers, who did not expect in such a dismal place to meet with any interruption.

They immediately left their man, after several slight stabs with their daggers, and took flight. Fainting with loss of blood, the wounded man sunk into the arms of the Prince ; his conductors then told him, that he had saved the life of the Marquis of Civitella, the nephew of the Cardinal A——i. As the Marquis's wounds bled very much, Biondello performed as well as he was able the office of surgeon, and the Prince immediately saw him taken to the palace of his uncle, which was not far distant from the spot. This done, he left the house, without discovering his rank. But through the means of a footman, who was acquainted with Biondello, he was betrayed. The following morning the Cardinal appeared, an old acquaintance from the Bucentauro. The visit lasted an hour ; the Cardinal was in great emotion, and when they separated tears stood in his eyes ; the Prince also appeared extremely concerned. The same evening his Highness paid a visit to the wounded man, whom the surgeon affirmed would soon recover. The cloak in which he was wrapped up had in some measure shielded him from the force with which the stabs were given. Since that accident, not a day has passed over without the Prince paying a visit to the Cardinal, or receiving one from him ; and a great friendship begins to exist between him and that family.

The Cardinal is a venerable man of sixty, with a majestic appearance, but full of gaiety and good health. They think him one of the richest prelates in the whole republic. Of his enormous fortune he himself is the treasurer ; and, although a prudent economist, he does not despise the pleasures of the world. This nephew, who is his only heir, does not always possess the good opinion of his uncle. Although the old

man is not an enemy to youthful pleasures, the conduct of the nephew appears to exhaust every principle of tolerance in his relation. His dissipated principles, and his licentious manner of living, supported by every vice that is countenanced by the grossest sensuality, make him the terror of all fathers, and the curse of domestic happiness. This last attack, it is said, was owing to an intrigue which he had concerted with the wife of the ——— ambassador: not to mention other troubles, from which only the power and money of the Cardinal could extricate him. But for this the Cardinal might be the most enviable man in all Italy, because he possesses every thing that can make life worth preserving. But his nephew's enormities render the gifts of fortune superfluous; and the continual fear of not being able to find an heir worthy of his property, diminishes the comfort that his Eminence would otherwise enjoy in such a state of affluence.

I have this information from Biondello. In this man the Prince has acquired a treasure. Every day he makes himself more worthy of estimation, and we almost hourly discover in him some new talent. Not long ago the Prince, being over-fatigued, could not sleep. The night-lamp was extinguished, and no bell could waken the valet de chambre, who it was soon found had gone out of the house to visit an opera girl. The Prince had the resolution to get up himself, to call one of his people. He had not gone far, when he heard at a little distance from him enchanting music. He followed the sound, and found Biondello playing upon the flute in his room, with his fellow-servants round him. He commanded him to proceed. With admirable skill Biondello repeated the same air, with the most delightful variations and niceties of a virtuoso. The Prince, who is a connoisseur in music, declared, that he might play with great confidence in the best concert.

"I must dismiss this man," said he to me the following morning; "I am unable to recompense him according to his merits." Biondello, who heard these words, came towards him. "Gracious sir, if you do that, you deprive me of my best reward." "You are worthy of something better than being a servant," said my master. "I will not

any longer be a bar to the improvement of your fortune." "Do not press upon me any other fortune, gracious sir, than that which I have chosen myself." "And to neglect such a talent—No! I must not consent." "Then permit me, your Highness, to exercise it every now and then in your presence."

To this proposition the Prince immediately consented, and Biondello obtained an apartment adjoining the sleeping-room of his master, where he lulled him to repose by soft and delicate airs, and awoke him in the morning with the same melody. The Prince insisted upon increasing his salary, which he did not accept without requesting his Highness to permit him to let it lie in his hands, as a capital which perhaps at some future period might be of service to him. The Prince expected that he would soon apply for his money, or some other favour; and whatever it might have been the Prince would not have denied it. Farewell, my best of friends. I expect with impatience news from R——n.

The same to the same.

June 4.

The Marquis Civitella, who is now entirely recovered from his wounds, was introduced last week by the Cardinal his uncle to the Prince, and since that day he has followed him like his shadow. Biondello, I suspect, has not told me the truth concerning the character of the Marquis, at least he has gone too far in his description. He is to all appearance a most amiable man, and irresistible in company. It is not possible to be angry with him; the first sight of him has conquered all my prejudices. Figure to your mind a man of the most enchanting person, a face full of uncommon expression, an insinuating tone of voice, possessed of the most fluent eloquence, united with all the advantages of the best education. He has none of that low despicable pride which in general so much disgraces the nobility here. Every action teems with the energy of youth, benevolence, and warm sensibility. They must, in relating his extravagances, have gone far beyond the truth; I never saw a more perfect contrast than his conduct is to

that which is represented of him. If he be really so licentious as Biondello asserted, then he is a siren, whom no creature is able to resist.

Towards me he acted with unreserved confidence. He confessed to me with the most agreeable frankness, that he did not stand in high favour with his uncle the Cardinal, and perhaps he might have deserved his censure. But he was seriously resolved to amend his life ; and he declared that the merit of his reformation would entirely fall to the Prince : in the mean time he hoped, through his interference, to be entirely reconciled with his uncle, because he had the highest confidence in the Prince's character. He had wanted till now a friend and instructor, and he hoped to acquire both in the person of the Prince, who, indeed, exercises all the authority of a tutor over him, and guides him with the paternal watchfulness and solicitude of a Mentor. This confidence also gives him certain advantages, and he knows perfectly well how to make them valuable. He seldom quits the presence of the Prince ; he partakes of all his pleasures, and has lately become one of the Bucerauro ; and that is lucky for him, — he was before too young. Wherever he goes with the Prince, he charms the society by his accomplishments, which he is well skilled in turning to the greatest advantage. Nobody, they say, ever could succeed in reclaiming him ; and should the Prince accomplish this Herculean labour, he will deserve the highest encomiums for his conduct. But I fear very much the tide will turn, and Mentor become the pupil of his scholar ; to this end all the present circumstances seem to lead.

The Prince — d — has departed, to the greatest satisfaction of all here, my master not excepted. What I thought, dear O —, is thus happily accomplished. Two such opposite characters could not long, I was confident, maintain a good understanding with each other. The Prince — d — was not long at Venice before I observed a schism in their friendship ; from which circumstance the Prince was in danger of losing all his former admirers. . Wherever he went, he found this rival in his way, who possessed the artful quality of turning every advantage in which our Prince was deficient to good account. He had a variety of

little manœuvres at his command, which our master, from a noble sensibility, disdained. From such circumstances, in a short time, he procured a number of friends of his own description to follow his advice and participate in his schemes.* It would have been better for the Prince if he had not considered him as an enemy ; but had looked forward to the time when this would have been the case. But now he has advanced too far into the stream, to reach the shore without difficulty. Although these trifles, by habit, have acquired an ascendancy over him, and probably he may despise them in his heart, yet his pride will not permit him to renounce them, naturally supposing that his submission will appear like conviction, rather than a free disposition to confess his abhorrence of them. The satirical manner in which they always conversed, and the spirit of rivalry that influenced his opponent, have also seized upon him. To preserve his conquests, and to maintain himself upon the dangerous principles to which the opinion of the world had riveted him, he is resolved to augment the allurements of fashion and gaiety, and this cannot be acquired but by splendour equal to his rank ; on that account he has been involved in perpetual banquets, concerts, and gaming. A long chain of poverty is the unavoidable consequence of this unhappy connection.

We have got rid at last of the rival ; but what he has subverted cannot so easily be restored. The treasure of the Prince is exhausted ; all that he had saved by a strict economy is gone ; we must hasten from Venice, or else be involved in debt, which, till now, he has carefully avoided. Our departure is certainly to take place as soon as fresh remittances arrive. The many unnecessary expenses he has incurred would be of little consequence if his happiness increased in proportion ; but he was never less happy than at present ! He feels that he is not now what he formerly was — he is dissatisfied with himself, and rushes into new dissipation, to avoid the piercing consequences of reflec-

* In the unfavourable opinion which the Baron F—— forms of our Prince, in several parts of the first letter, every one who has the happiness to know him intimately, will think with me, that he went beyond the limits of his judgment, and will ascribe it to the prejudice of this young observer.

tion. One new acquaintance follows another, which is fatal to his reformation. I know not what may happen; we must depart, — we have no other safety. — But, dear friend, as yet I have not received a single line from you; how must I interpret this long silence?

The same to the same.

June 12th.

Receive my thanks, dear friend, for that token of your remembrance which young B——hl brought over to me. But what do you say about letters which I was to have received? I have not received any letters from you till now, — not even a line. What a circuit must those which I now receive have taken! For the future, dear O——, when you honour me with your letters, send them by Trent, and under cover to my master.

We have at length been obliged, my dear friend, to take that step which we had hitherto so fortunately avoided. The remittances were kept back, even at this pressing emergency — for the first time were they kept back; we were absolutely compelled to have recourse to a usurer, and the Prince willingly pays something more for the sake of secrecy. The worst of these unpleasant circumstances is, that it delays our departure. Such was the state of our affairs when the Prince and I came to an explanation. The whole of the business had passed through Biondello's hands, and the Jew was present before I had the least suspicion of it. I was grieved to the heart to see the Prince reduced to such an extremity, and it revived in me all the recollection of the past, and all my fears for the future; so that I certainly might have looked a little melancholy and gloomy when the usurer left the room. The Prince, to whom the preceding scene had doubtless been by no means pleasing, walked backwards and forwards with uneasiness. The rouleaus of gold were yet lying on the table — I was standing at the window, and employing myself in counting the windows in the *Procuratie* — there was a long silence. At length he addressed himself to me —

“F——,” he began, “I cannot bear any dismal faces about me.” I was silent. “Why do you not answer

me? Do I not see that it will break your heart not to pour forth your vexation? I command you to speak. You may, perhaps, wonder what extraordinary affairs I am concealing from you." "If I am gloomy, gracious Sir," replied I, "it is only because I do not see you in better spirits." "I know," continued he, "that you think I have acted wrongly for some time past — that every step which I have taken has displeased you — that — What does the Count d'O — say in his letters?" "The Count d'O — has not written to me." "Not written! Why will you not confess the truth? You lay open your hearts to each other — you and the Count. I know it very well: however, you need not conceal it from me. I shall not introduce myself into your secrets." "The Count d'O —," replied I, "has only answered the first of three letters which I wrote to him." "I was wrong," continued he; "is it not so?" (taking up one of the rouleaus) "I should not have acted thus." "I see very plainly that the step was *necessary*." "I ought not to have involved myself in such a necessity."

I remained silent. "Indeed, I ought not to have ventured beyond that point in the completion of my wishes, so as to have become a grey-beard as soon as I became a man. Because I once step forth from the dreary uniformity of my former life, and look around me to see whether there will spring up no source of enjoyment for me in any other quarter; because I ——" "If it were only a trial, gracious Sir, I have nothing more to say; for the experience which it has procured for you would not be purchased at too dear a rate, though it cost three times as much. It hurts me, I must confess, that the opinion of the world should have to decide upon the question, How you can be happy?" "Fortunate man, who can thus despise the opinion of the world! I am its creature, and must be its slave. What else are we governed by but opinion? Opinion is every thing with us princes. Opinion is our nurse and educatress in infancy, our legislatress and mistress in our manly years, and our crutch in old age. Take from us what we receive from opinion, and the meanest of the humblest class is better off than we are;

for his fate has taught him a philosophy which enables him to bear it. A prince who laughs at opinion, is his own destroyer, like the priest who denies the existence of a God."

"And yet, gracious Prince—" "I know what you are going to say. I can pass the boundary of the circle which my birth has drawn around me. But can I eradicate from my memory all the foolish ideas which education and early habit have planted in it, and which a hundred thousand of you fools have ever been impressing with more and more firmness? Every one wishes to be what he is to *perfection*, and our existence consists, in short, in *appearing happy*. If we cannot be so according to your mode, shall we not for that reason be so at all? If we can no longer taste of joy immediately from its uncorrupted source, shall we not deceive ourselves with an artificial enjoyment? shall we not snatch a small compensation even from the very hand which robs us?" "You once found these joys in your own heart." "But if I do not any longer find them there!—Oh! how came we to fall upon this subject? Why must you awake in me the recollection of that, even if I have had recourse to this tumult of voluptuousness, in order to stifle a voice which renders my life miserable—in order to lull to rest this inquisitive reason, which moves to and fro in my brain like a sharp sickle, and with every new stroke cuts off a new branch of my happiness?" "Best of princes!" He got up, and walked backwards and forwards in the room with unusual agitation, and soon after left it.

Pardon, dear O——, this tedious letter. You wish to know every trifle which concerns the Prince, and I may justly rank his moral philosophy among them. I know that the state of his mind is important to you, and his actions, I am aware, are on that account also important to you. I have for that reason faithfully transcribed all that I recollected of this conversation. I shall at a future period inform you of a new occurrence, which you could hardly have been led to expect from a dialogue like that of to-day. Farewell.

The same to the same.

July 1.

As the time for our departure from Venice approaches, we are determined to employ this week in an examination of all the remarkable pictures and buildings, which is generally delayed to the last moment. They praised highly the work* of Paul Veronese, which was to be seen in a Benedictine convent upon the island of St. George. You must not expect from me a minute description of this beautiful masterpiece, from the contemplation of which I derived the most satisfactory pleasure; but it was a sight worthy to be enjoyed longer. We should have had as many hours as minutes to study a painting of a hundred and twenty figures, which is thirty feet in breadth. It is impossible to observe the beauties which the artist has displayed in it, by just glancing at the whole. It is however a pity that so valuable a work, which ought to adorn a place of more utility, should be buried within the walls of a convent for a few monks to gaze at. The church of this convent deserves also the attention of the connoisseur: it is one of the handsomest in the city.

Towards evening we set off for the Giudecca, to spend a few hours in the charming gardens that surround it. The society, which was not numerous, separated very soon; and Civitella, who had been the whole day seeking for an opportunity to speak to me in private, thus addressed me—"You are the friend of the Prince, and possess his confidence, as I know from good authority. When I went to-day to his hotel, I met a man upon the stairs, and immediately guessed the business he had been upon. I found the Prince, as I entered his apartments, thoughtful and dejected." I was about to interrupt him. "You cannot deny it," he continued, "I know the man, for I took very particular notice of his person. Is it possible that the Prince, who has friends at Venice, to whom he is as dear as life, should in a case of necessity make use of such a wretch? Be sincere, baron!—Is the Prince embarrassed in his circumstances? You may endeavour

* The marriage at Cana.

to hide the truth, but it is in vain. What I cannot learn from you I will obtain from a man to whom every secret is a prize, and ready to be sold." "What, Marquis!" "Pardon me. I must endure the charge of being indiscreet, to avoid the imputation of ingratitude. The Prince saved my life, and, what goes far beyond that, he has instilled into my mind the principles of virtue. If I see the Prince act in a manner which must be expensive to him, and beneath his dignity; if it is in my power to assist him, I never can resist it." "The Prince is not now in any embarrassment. Several remittances, which we expected from Trent, are, indeed, unexpectedly detained; but accidentally perhaps, or from the idea that his departure is near at hand. This is now fixed upon; and till then—" He shook his head. "Do not deceive me," said he. "I mean not by doing this to diminish the obligation I owe the Prince. No, not all the riches of my uncle could repay him. I am anxious to free him from one unhappy moment. My uncle possesses a large fortune, which I can dispose of as if it were my own. I consider it a fortunate circumstance that the moment is arrived when I can be useful to the Prince. I know," he continued, "with what delicacy the Prince will treat my offer;—but, on the other hand, I hope he will lay aside his prejudices, and suffer me to enjoy the satisfaction of having in some measure returned the obligation I owe to him." He continued to urge his request till I had promised him that I would do all in my power to make the Prince accept his offer. But I knew his character, and for that reason I despaired of success. He appeared satisfied however with my promise, though he confessed that it would give him great uneasiness if the Prince considered him in the light of a stranger. Lost in conversation, we had wandered from the company, and were just about to return, when Z—— approached us. "I thought the Prince had been with you," said he: "is he not here?"

We immediately returned with him, thinking to find the Prince with the other part of the company. "The society is together, but the Prince is not among them," said I: "I really do not know how it happened that we missed

him." Here Civitella suggested that he might possibly have visited the adjoining church, which he had a little time before remarked for its beauty. We immediately went to seek for him there. As we approached it we discovered Biondello waiting at the entrance. When we came nearer, we observed the Prince rush hastily out from a small door; the agitation of his mind was impressed upon his countenance. He called Biondello to him, and seemed to instruct him in the execution of some commission of consequence; his eyes were constantly directed to the gate, which remained open. Biondello hastened into the church. The Prince, without perceiving us, pushed through the crowd, and went back to the society.

It was resolved to sup in an open pavilion, and the Marquis, without our knowledge, had procured some musicians to entertain us with a concert. It was quite select; but there was among the performers a young lady who sung delightfully, and whose voice did not more enchant us than the beauty of her person. Nothing seemed to make an impression upon the Prince; he spoke little, and answered our questions confusedly; his eyes were constantly riveted upon the spot from whence Biondello was to come; and it was visible to all, that something of consequence affected his mind. Civitella asked him how he liked the church; he could not give any description of it. He spoke of several remarkable pictures, which were highly esteemed; but he had not observed them. We perceived that our questions were unpleasant to him, and therefore we discontinued our enquiries. One hour after another passed away, and Biondello did not arrive. The impatience of the Prince could no longer be concealed: he went from supper very early, and walked alone up and down the aisles of the church with agitated steps. No person could imagine what had happened to him. I did not venture to ask him the reason for such a sudden change in his disposition, as I could not now treat him with that familiarity I did formerly. With so much more impatience, therefore, did I expect the arrival of Biondello, that he might explain to me the mystery.

It was past ten o'clock before he came back. The ac-

counts which he brought to the Prince did not contribute to dissipate the gloom of melancholy. He returned to the pavilion apparently uneasy and dissatisfied. Soon after, the boat was ordered, and we went home. I could not find a single opportunity the whole evening to speak with Biondello; and I was at last obliged to go to bed without being able to satisfy my curiosity. The Prince dismissed us very early; but a thousand unpleasant reflections which tormented me kept me awake. I could distinctly hear the Prince walking up and down his chamber till a late hour; at last I dropped into a dose, but was soon roused from slumber by a person who appeared at my bedside with a lamp in his hand. When I looked up, I discovered it to be the Prince. He could not close his eyes, he said, and begged of me to pass the night with him. I would have risen and dressed myself; but he commanded me to remain as I was, and seated himself on my bed.

"An extraordinary circumstance has happened to me to-day," said he, "and the impression it has made upon my mind will never be effaced. I went, as you must recollect, to see * * * church, to which Civitella directed my attention, and which had at a distance excited my curiosity. As neither you nor he were present, I went in alone, and bade Biondello wait for me at the entrance. The church was quite dark and solitary. The aisles were cold and damp. I felt a sudden chillness steal all over me; I saw myself alone amidst the dead, in a sanctuary where a solemn silence, as in the grave, reigned in every part. I placed myself in the middle of the dome, and gave my soul up to contemplation. Soon, however, the gothic beauty of the building arrested my attention. It appeared, as I examined it, more and more delightful. It called forth the powers of awful meditation. The evening bell was tolling; its hollow sound, as I heard it faintly in the aisle, overpowered me with an unusual melancholy. Some altar-pieces at a distance attracted my attention. I went nearer, to view them distinctly: unperceived, I had wandered through the aisles of the church, and was approaching the end, when, by accident, I went round a pillar up a flight of steps, which lead into a side chapel, decorated with several little altars

and statues of saints. As soon as I entered the chapel I heard a soft whispering, turned towards the spot from whence I heard the voice, and about two steps from me discovered a female figure. Fright almost overpowered me; but after a few moments had elapsed I recovered, and contemplated an object which I cannot describe with justice."

"And does your Highness know for certain that it was alive—that it was not fancy—a picture of the brain?"

"Hear farther—it was a lady. Until that moment I had never regarded the sex! The rays of the setting sun, that illumined the chapel, enabled me to observe that she was in the act of praying before an altar. Nature seemed to have lavished all her perfections on her lovely form. She was elegantly dressed in black silk, which spread around her in large folds like a Spanish robe; her long light-coloured hair burst from under the veil, and flowed in charming disorder down her back; one of her hands touched the crucifix, as she rested her head upon the other. But how shall I find words to describe to you the angelic beauty of her countenance! The sunbeams played upon it, and heightened the divine expression that seemed to glow in it. Can you call back to your mind the Madonna of Florence? She was the exact copy of the artless enchanting beauty which is so irresistibly expressed in that picture."

Of the Madonna of which the Prince speaks, the case is this:—Shortly after your departure, the Prince became acquainted with a painter from Florence, who had been ordered to Venice to paint an altar-piece for a church; his name I do not now remember. He brought with him three pictures, which he had executed for the gallery in the Canarian Palace. The subjects were a Madonna, a Heloise, and a Venus in dishabille. From the exquisite manner in which they were all painted, it was almost impossible to decide which was superior in beauty. The Prince alone did not hesitate a moment to decide; they were scarcely put before him when the Madonna attracted his whole attention; in both the others the genius of the painter was admired, but this he surveyed with enthusiasm. He was so enamoured with it, that he could not be persuaded to quit it. The artist, we could perceive by his countenance, enjoyed

the judgment of the Prince ; he had the wit not to separate the three pictures, and demanded 1500 zequins for them. The Prince offered him half the price for the Madonna. The artist insisted upon his demand ; and who knows what might have happened if he had not found a purchaser for his works ? Two hours after, all the three pieces were gone ; and we have not seen them since. This was the picture that the Prince brought to his memory.

" I stood," he continued, " in silent admiration. She did not observe me ; she was not disturbed by my arrival ; so entirely was she lost in adoration. She prayed to her God, and I prayed to her eyes ; saints, altars, or burning tapers, had never before reminded me that I was in a sanctuary ; I was seized with enthusiasm. Shall I confess to you, that I believed, from that very moment, in the influence of the crucifix she held in her beautiful hand ? I read our Saviour's answer in her eyes. Thanks to her charming piety ! she painted his true character to me. My ideas wandered with her's through the ways of heaven. She rose, and I stepped aside with embarrassment ; the noise I made discovered me. The unexpected appearance of a man alarmed her ; I was fearful that my boldness might offend ; for as she glanced at me, the beauteous rays of innocence and virtue played upon her countenance. As she rose from prayer, I was the first happy creature which offered itself to her sight. In an adjoining corner of the chapel, I saw an elderly lady rise from her seat, and come towards us. I had not till then perceived her. She was but a few steps distant from me, and no doubt had witnessed all my actions. I was somewhat confused — I cast my eyes as it were involuntarily on the ground, and they rushed by me. I looked after her as she passed along the aisle. The beautiful figure was with her — What grace, what majesty appeared in all her steps ! She was no longer the being that I first beheld ; no, she was possessed of a thousand new charms. I followed at a distance with trembling steps, undetermined whether I should overtake her or not. I waited with impatience to see if she would bestow upon me another look ; — for the one she gave me as she passed by was lost upon me. With what extreme anxiety did I expect it !

"They stopped suddenly ; but I was not able to set a foot forwards. The elderly lady, who perhaps might be her mother, observed the disorder of her hair, and immediately adjusted it. That done, they approached the gate. I doubled my steps — she disappeared by degrees — I could only see the shadow of her robe as it floated in the air. A flower had fallen from her bosom ; she returned in haste to fetch it — she once more looked back, and — after me ! — whom else could she seek in a place so solitary ? She appeared as if I was no longer a stranger to her ; — but she deserted me like the flower which seemed unworthy to be replaced in her bosom. Dear F — I am almost ashamed to own to you with what childish rapture I interpreted that look — that last expressive look, which was not perhaps designed for me !"

"You may rely upon it, it was."

"It is singular," said the Prince, after a long silence, "that we should lament the loss of an object we never saw before — but I feel as if I exist only for her. That in a single moment man should display two such opposite characters ? I look back upon the happiness I received yesterday morning with all that exquisite feeling with which we trace the days of childhood. This picture lives in my remembrance, and forces me to acknowledge that it is my god !" "Recollect, gracious Sir," said I, "in what gloomy thoughtfulness your mind was wrapt when this ideal divinity appeared to you ; the association of ideas alone inflamed your imagination. Quitting the beautiful light of day, and the tumult of the world, you were suddenly surrounded by darkness and silence, impressed with sensations which, as you confessed yourself, tended to impress you with melancholy, whilst the majesty of the structure, and the contemplation of beauty in the works of different artists, aided the train of ideas you were supporting. In the mean time, alone and solitary, you gave yourself up to reflection ; in the midst of your meditations you observe the figure of a female, where you did not expect to meet a soul — still more enchanting by a fine form, which was heightened by a favourable illumination of the setting sun — a fortunate situation, and a

captivating display of piety — what is more likely than that your disturbed fancy deceived you ?”

“ Can memory give back impressions it has never received ? In my whole country there is nothing that I could justly put in comparison with that picture. Entire and unchanged, as in the moment of beholding it, it lies in my memory ; I can think of nothing but that picture — and in vain might you offer me a whole world for it !”

“ Gracious Prince, this is love.” “ Must it then be by a name that I am to be made happy ? Love ! — Do not think so meanly of my feelings as to accuse me of that which influences a thousand feeble souls ! Who has ever felt what I endure ! Such a being as I am never was in existence before ! How then can you give my sensations a name ? It is a new and singular suffering, originating with her that I adore. — Love ! No, from love I am quite secure !”

“ You sent Biondello, no doubt, to find out the path your fair unknown pursued, and to get some information of her — What accounts did he bring you back ?”

“ Biondello has discovered nothing. He found her at the church gate. An old well-dressed man (who had the appearance of a citizen from this city, and not a servant) conducted her to the boat. Some poor peasants smiled upon her as she passed them, and she rewarded them with money. By this means one of her hands became visible ; it was ornamented with several precious stones. She said something to her companion, which Biondello did not understand ; he maintained it to be Greek. She had to walk a considerable distance to the canal. The people began to collect round her ; so extraordinary a sight surprised all the peasants. Nobody knew her — but beauty is born a queen. Ali made way for her in an humble submissive manner. She let fall a black veil over her face, and hastened into the boat. To the extent of the channel of the Giudecca, Biondello kept the boat in sight, but could not pursue its course farther, owing to the concourse of people.”

“ Has he not taken notice of the waterman ?” “ He endeavoured in vain to find him ; for it was not one of them with whom he is connected. The poor people of whom

he enquired could give him no other account, than that the lady for several weeks past had landed on the same spot on a Sunday evening, when she distributed some gold pieces amongst them. They were Dutch ducats, which I discovered by one that Biondello had procured."

"A Greek lady of fortune and rank, as it should seem by your description. That is quite sufficient, gracious Sir, to aid us in a discovery. But a Greek lady and in a catholic church!" "Why not? She may have changed her religion. But I admit there is something in all this that we do not understand. Why does she come only once a week? Why only on a Sunday evening, at an hour when the church is entirely deserted, as Biondello told me? — Next Sunday evening must decide this. But till then, my dear friend, assist me in the difficult task of passing away the time! Days and hours will elapse in their ordinary course, but are of too long duration for a mind like mine." "And when that day arrives — what is to be done?" "What is to be done? I shall see her again. I shall discover who she is, and the place of her residence. Why should I be unhappy, when I know how to alleviate my sufferings?" "But our departure from Venice, which is fixed for the beginning of next month?" "Could I imagine that Venice contained such a treasure! I will not think of my past life, but date my existence from this hour."

I thought this a favourable opportunity of keeping my word with the Marquis. I gave the Prince to understand, that for him to continue at Venice in the present state of our finances would by no means be proper; and that, if he prolonged his stay beyond the term, he could not expect that his court would support him. I now discovered a secret which till then had been unknown to me, that he received succours clandestinely from his sister, the reigning Princess of —; which she is very willing to increase if his court should abandon him. This sister is a pious fanatic, you know, and thinks the great savings which she makes at a very economical court cannot be disposed of better than to a brother whose character she enthusiastically venerates. I was confident, some time back, that there existed a good understanding between them, and that many

letters had been exchanged ; but as the Prince's own resources were sufficient to defray his expenses, I never once thought of this secret channel. It was now clear that the Prince had expenses which were unknown to me ; these still remain a secret ; and if I may conclude from what I know of his character, they are not of that nature which will disgrace him. I was certain now that I had found him out. I did not therefore hesitate to make known to him immediately the offer of the Marquis, which, to my great astonishment, was accepted without any difficulty. He gave me free liberty to conduct the business with the Marquis in such a manner as I thought, best, and then ordered me to dismiss the usurer, and write immediately to his sister.

It was daybreak when we separated. This event has made me very uneasy for more reasons than one, particularly that it compels us to prolong our stay at Venice. This sudden passion for the unknown lady I expect will rather be of service to him than otherwise. She will perhaps be the means of reclaiming the Prince. I hope it will affect him in the ordinary way with a slight illness, and so eradicate his prejudices. Farewell, my dear friend. I have written this letter on the spur of the moment. The post is about to depart. You will receive this letter with the foregoing one on the same day.

The same to the same.

July 20.

This Civitella is one of the most serviceable men in the world. The Prince had not long left me when a note arrived from the Marquis, in which he politely reminded me of my promise. I sent him immediately a bond, executed by the Prince for six thousand zechins ; in less than half an hour it was returned, with an enclosed draught for double the sum. The Prince accepted it, but insisted that the bond should be given in return, which was only for the space of six weeks.

This whole week has been spent in enquiries after the mysterious Greek lady. Biondello put his machines in motion ; but all were fruitless. He has indeed found the

waterman ; but he could learn nothing farther from him, than that he had set both the ladies on shore upon the island of Murano, where two chairs waited for them. He supposed her to be an English lady, because she spoke a foreign language, and paid him in gold. He did not know her conductor, but he appeared to him to be a looking-glass manufacturer from Murano. We were now convinced that we had not to seek for her in the Giudecca, and that she was probably at home upon the island of Murano ; but the misfortune was, that, from the description which the Prince gave of her, she could not be known by a third person. The impassioned frenzy which seized him at the moment hindered him from observing her minutely. To that to which other people would have principally directed their attention, he was quite blind. After such a description as his, one might have sought for her in Ariosto or Tasso with more probability than upon a Venetian island. His enquiries must be made with the greatest secrecy and precaution, to prevent impeaching the virtue of the lady ; and as Biondello was the only person besides the Prince who had seen her through the veil, and therefore could know her again, they sought together for her in all places where it was thought possible that she could be. The life of this good-tempered man was this week spent in traversing all the streets of Venice. In the Greek church he made particular enquiries, but all to no purpose ; and the Prince, although more and more impatient at every disappointment, was at last obliged to comfort himself till the next Sunday evening.

His impatience was pitiable. Nothing pleased him—nothing excited his attention. His hours were spent in anxiety and distress : he fled from society, but the evil increased in solitude. He was never more surrounded by visitors than he was this week. His departure had been announced as near at hand—all pressed themselves upon him. Being obliged to entertain those people, to avoid all suspicion, we contrived to occupy his mind in order that we might dissipate his melancholy. In this situation Civitella hit upon gaming ; and to detain the company, he proposed to stake very high. In the mean time he flattered

himself that he should tempt the Prince to play, which he thought would very soon conquer his romantic ideas. This scheme, although hazardous, they knew could not injure him, as they had it in their power to desist at any time from playing.

"Cards," said the Marquis, "have often prevented me from pursuing follies which I anticipated, and relieved me from reflecting upon those I had committed. The tranquillity of mind which a pair of charming eyes deprive me of, I have very often found again at the faro table; and women never had half the effect upon my spirits as not being enabled to play from poverty."

I consented, in as far as I thought Civitella might be in the right; but the means which we instituted began soon to become more dangerous than the evil we endeavoured to destroy. The Prince, who thought to make the game attractive by betting very high, found very soon no bounds to it. He was quite out of his element. What he did was with apparent indifference, although his actions betrayed impatience and uneasiness of mind. You know how indifferent he is about money, and now he became totally insensible of its value. Gold pieces ran away like water. He lost almost upon every card, because he played without paying any attention. He forfeited large sums, because he ventured like a desperate, unfortunate man.—Dear O——, I communicate this with an aching heart: in four days we had not any of the twelve thousand zechins. Do not reproach me. I accuse myself sufficiently. But could I prevent it? Could I oblige the Prince to listen to me? Could I do more than remonstrate with him? I did what lay in my power: surely I may say, that I am not guilty. Civitella also lost. I won six hundred zechins! The unexampled misfortune of the Prince was observed by all, and for that very reason he would not abandon the game. Civitella, who likes to show his readiness to oblige him, lent him immediately the required sums.

This scene is closed; but the Prince is indebted to the Marquis twenty-four thousand zechins. Oh how I long for the spare money of his pious sister! If all princes acted thus, my dear friend! His Highness behaves towards

the Marquis as if he had done him the greatest honour, and thus he plays his part very well. Civitella sought to console me, by saying, that he thought his extraordinary ill luck would powerfully assist in bringing the Prince back again to reason. As for the money, he was not anxious about it. He himself did not miss it—three times as much was at the Prince's service. The Cardinal also assured me, that the sentiments of his nephew were sincere, and that he was always ready to support him in them. The worst was, that these extraordinary sacrifices did not at all affect him. One would think the Prince at least had played with some intent: but it was not so. The passion which we endeavoured to destroy seemed only to increase with ill luck: when a great sum was staked, all pressed around his chair with expectation, but his eyes were watching for Biondello, to steal from his looks the news which he might have for him. Biondello always returned unsuccessful, and he as continually lost. The money at last fell into very distressed hands. Some poor noblemen, who report says are supported by the alms they obtain in the market-place, came into the house perfect beggars, and left it as rich as Jews. Civitella pointed them out to me.

"Behold," said he, "how many poor devils this money is of service to; how comes it then that men of wit do not direct their attention to such practices? This circumstance pleases me: it is princely. A great man may sometimes, by his errors, make people happy, and like a bounteous stream enrich the neighbouring fields by overflowing its banks." Civitella's ideas are noble—but the Prince owes him 24,000 zechins.

At last the long-expected Sunday evening arrived, and my master could not be prevented from walking in the afternoon in the * * * church. His stand was taken exactly upon the same spot in the chapel where he had seen for the first time the unknown that had captivated him, yet so that he could not immediately be seen by her. Biondello was ordered to keep watch near the church gate, and to form a connection with the attendants of the lady. I had determined to step, as by accident, into the boat at its return, to trace the unknown farther, if the first scheme should not

succeed. At the place where, upon the report of the watermen, she landed, we hired two chairs, and the Prince commanded the chamberlain Z—— to follow in a separate boat, and he himself would meet her in the church, and try his fortune there first. Civitella did not assist us, because he had already acquired a bad character with the females at Venice, and therefore he determined not to make the lady mistrust his friend by his presence. You see, my dear Count, that it could not be for want of plans, if the beautiful unknown escaped us. Never was there offered up in a church more sanguine prayers for success, nor greater hopes created, and never was man deceived more cruelly. The Prince waited till sunset. He trembled at every noise that approached the chapel: the creaking of every church-door increased his anxiety. Seven long hours passed, and no Greek lady arrived. I say nothing of the state of his mind. You know well what it is to be disappointed in the attainment of an object for which one has sighed seven days and nights.

The same to the same.

August.

No, my dear friend, you wrong the good Biondello. Indeed you entertain a false suspicion of him. I give up to your prejudices all Italians; but this man is honest. You think it singular that a man of such brilliant talents, and conduct without example, should hire himself as a servant, if he had no secret ends to answer; and from that you draw the conclusion that he is a suspicious character. How! Is it then so extraordinary that a man of talents should make himself respected by a prince, in whose power it is to advance his fortune? Is it dishonourable to serve him? Does not Biondello clearly show that his attachment to the Prince is personal? He has already confessed to him that he has a particular favour to ask of him, and which, when known, will undoubtedly unravel all the secret. He perhaps has entered into his service with some particular view; but may it not be innocent? It appears strange to you that this Biondello, when you were present, did not display the great talents which he now seems to be possessed of. That is true; but he had not then an opportunity to dis-

tinguish himself? The Prince did not at that time want him, and his other qualities were discovered in him by accident. But we experienced not long ago a proof of his sincerity, which will remove all your doubts. The Prince of late has been very particularly noticed. Endeavours are made to obtain a secret knowledge of his manner of life, and of his acquaintance. I know not for what reason those enquiries are made; but attend to what I shall communicate.

There is at St. George a public-house, to which Biondello often resorts. He may have some love-intrigue there for aught I know. He was there for several days in the company of advocates, men in office under the government, merry brothers and old acquaintances. They were equally astonished and rejoiced to behold him again. The former friendship was renewed, and every one related his adventures since their separation. Biondello also told his. He did it in a few words. They wished him joy of his new situation: they had heard of the splendid manner in which the Prince lived; of his liberality in particular towards his people that knew how to keep a secret; his acquaintance with the Cardinal A—— was also well known; and his partiality for gaming, &c. &c. Biondello started. They told him, that he played his part very well, but they said they knew that he was the secret messenger of the Prince. The advocates sat on each side of him, and the bottle was speedily emptied. They persuaded him to drink more: he excused himself, and said that his head would not bear much wine; he therefore affected to be intoxicated. "Yes," said one of the advocates at last, "Biondello may understand his business; but he has not yet finished his lesson—he is but half a scholar." "What is wanting?" said Biondello. "He understands one art," said the man; "that is, to keep a secret; but he is not acquainted with the other, which is, to get rid of it again with profit." "Am I likely to find a purchaser for it?" asked Biondello.

The other part of the company left the room, and he remained alone with his two friends, who now came to the point. To make it short, he was to give them the means by which the Prince became acquainted with the Cardinal

and his nephew, to discover to them the sources by which the Prince received, and the way he exhausted his money, and to deliver into their hands the letters which were written to the Count O——. Biondello appointed to meet them, and discuss it another time: who it was that induced them to do this he could not get from them, but concluded, from the great offers which were made to him, that it must be some wealthy person who commissioned them to entice him to this confession. Last night he discovered to my master the whole of this affair. He was anxious to imprison the advocates; but Biondello remonstrated, and said, if they were ever to be at liberty again, he should lose all his credit with that class of people, and perhaps his life. These sort of people all hang together, and stand up for each other. He would sooner, he said, have the high council at Venice for his enemy than be looked upon by them as a betrayer; and he could not be so useful to the Prince, if he lost the confidence of these people. We tried to conjecture with whom this curiosity might originate. Who is there at Venice that can be interested in knowing what my master receives and spends; what concerns he has with the Cardinal A——, and what I write to you? Is this a scheme of the Prince — d——? or is the Armenian with us again?

The same to the same.

August.

The Prince abounds in happiness and love. He has found the Greek lady. Hear how this happened. A stranger who had travelled over Chiozza, and gave an enchanting description of that beautiful city, which is situated near the Gulf, made the Prince desirous to see it. Yesterday his wishes were put in execution; and to avoid all unnecessary expense, no other person attended him but Z——, Biondello, and myself, as he travelled incognito. We took places in a boat that usually sailed to that place with company. The society was not very select, and the voyage far from being agreeable. Chiozza is built upon piles, like Venice, and has about forty thousand inhabitants. You meet there very few people of distinction; the streets are crowded with fishermen

and sailors. He who wears a wig and a mantle is called a rich man ; lapels and veils are the sign of poverty. The city itself is handsome, but to admire it, you must not have seen Venice.

The waterman, who had more passengers to carry, was obliged to be quick in his return to Venice, and nothing at Chiozza particularly attracted the notice of the Prince. The vessel was full when we arrived. As the company was rather troublesome on our passage thither, we hired a separate room for our better accommodation. The Prince enquired, who were the other passengers ? A Dominican, was the answer, and several ladies. My master was not at all curious to see them, and immediately went to his room. The Greek lady was the sole object of our discourse on our passage, and it was the same on our return. The Prince repeated his adventure in the church in the highest transports of delight ; the time was passed in forming plans, and then rejecting them ; till, before we were aware of it, Venice was in sight. Some of the passengers left the vessel, the Dominican was amongst them. The waterman went to the ladies, who, as we now learned, had been only separated from us by a thin partition. He asked them, where he should land them. " Upon the island of Murano," was the answer. — " The island of Murano !" cried the Prince, as the sudden transport of joy shot through his soul. Before I could make him any answer, Biondello rushed in.

" Do you know with whom we have travelled ? " — The Prince started up — " Is she here ? " " Yes, she is," continued Biondello. " I am just come from her conductor." The Prince rushed out of the room. A thousand sensations overpowered his mind. He was seized with a sudden trembling : a deathlike paleness spread itself over his countenance. I burned with expectation. It is impossible for me to describe to you our situation.

The boat stopped at Murano. The Prince jumped upon the shore. She came. I perceived, from the Prince's countenance, that it was she. Her appearance did not leave any doubt of the fact. A more beautiful figure I never saw : the flattering descriptions the Prince had given of her were fully realised. A blush of satisfaction was

spread over her face, when she beheld the Prince. She must have overheard our whole conversation, and could not doubt that she had been the subject of it. She gave her attendant a significant look, which seemed to say, "This is he!" and with an artless embarrassment she cast her eyes upon the ground. A small board was placed from the shore to the ship, on which she had to walk. She seemed anxious to land; but although she affected timidity, it appeared to arise more from a desire to be assisted, than from the danger of crossing the plank. The Prince stretched out his arm to assist her. Necessity overcame etiquette. She accepted his hand, and leaped upon the shore. The sudden agitation of the Prince made him uncivil; for he forgot the other lady, who waited for the same act of politeness—And what would he not have forgotten in that moment? I at last rendered her that service, and deprived myself of the pleasure of observing how the interview, which took place between my master and the lady, affected her. He still held her hand in his; and, I believe, without knowing that he did so.

"It is not the first time, Signora, that—that—" He hesitated. "I ought to remember," she lisped. "In the church," said he. "Yes," said she, "it was there." "And could I flatter myself to-day—so near." Here she drew her hand softly out of his. He recovered himself immediately. Biondello, who in the mean time had spoken with the servant, came to his assistance. "Signora," he began, "the ladies ordered their chairs to be waiting for them at a certain time, but we have arrived here sooner than was expected. Here is a garden in the vicinity, where you may retire to avoid the tumult." The proposal was accepted, and you may judge with what delight the Prince accompanied her. They remained in the garden till late in the evening. It fell to my lot, assisted by Z——, to entertain the old lady, that the Prince might remain undisturbed with his beloved. He made good use of his time, for he obtained permission to pay her a visit. He is now there. As soon as he returns, I shall know more of the matter.

Yesterday, when we came home, we found the expected remittances from our court, but accompanied by a letter,

which affected my master very much. He is recalled by it, and in a tone which he has not been accustomed to. He has answered it contemptuously, and intends to prolong his stay here. The remittances are just sufficient to pay the interest of the capital which he owes. We look for an answer from his sister with great anxiety.

The same to the same.

September.

The Prince has had a quarrel with his court: all our resources from thence are cut off. The six weeks, which were limited for my master to have paid the debt due to the Marquis, are elapsed; we have received no remittances from his cousin, whom he earnestly solicited to assist him; neither have we had any from his sister. You may easily imagine that Civitella does not remind him of his engagement; but the faithful memory of the Prince continually imposes upon him the idea, that he is still the Marquis's debtor. Yesterday came letters from the reigning Count. We had just concluded a new contract with the master of our hotel; and the Prince had openly declared, that he intended to protract his stay in Venice. Without speaking a word, he gave me the letter. His eyes darted fire: to me his countenance was a sufficient indication of the contents. Should you imagine, dear O——, that they are at *** informed of all my master's connections; and that calumny has been very busy in inventing falsehoods to defame him?

They had heard with displeasure, it is said in the letter, that the Prince had not supported his former character, but had pursued a conduct which was in total contradiction to his former praiseworthy manner of thinking. They affirmed that he rioted with women, and was addicted to gaming in an extravagant manner; that he was involved in debt; that he studied physiognomy, and sought after conjurors; that he held suspicious correspondence with prelates, and that he possessed a household which was more than his income could support. They had even been assured that it was his intention to complete his bad conduct by turning an apostate, and embracing the Roman catholic religion; and, to exculpate himself from the last serious

accusation, they expected he would immediately return. A banker at Venice, to whom he was directed to deliver in the amount of his debts, was authorised, immediately after his departure, to satisfy his creditors; for, under circumstances so unpleasant, they did not think it safe to trust the money in his own hands. What accusations! and in what an artful manner alleged! I took the letter, and read it over a second time—I endeavoured to palliate the offence, but I did not succeed.

Z—— now reminded me of the secret enquiries which had been made by the advocates. The time, the contents, all circumstances agreed. We had falsely attributed them to the Armenian. Now it was clear from whom they were derived. Apostasy!—But whose interest can it be to calumniate my master in such an execrable manner? I fear it is a piece of mischief invented by the Prince —d——, who will follow it up, to get my master from Venice. He remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. His countenance made me tremble. I threw myself at his feet. “For Heaven’s sake, gracious Prince,” I exclaimed, “do not think of it so seriously. You shall, you will, have the greatest satisfaction. Leave the business to me. Send me there, for it is beneath your dignity to go personally to justify yourself against such vile calumnies: permit me to do it. The calumniator must, he shall, be named, and the eyes of the * * * must be opened.

In this situation Civitella found us: he asked, with astonishment, the reason of our embarrassment. Z—— and I were silent. The Prince, who never made any distinction between him and us, was now too much agitated in his mind to act prudently on this occasion, and commanded us to communicate to him the contents of the letter. I hesitated, but the Prince snatched it from my hands, and gave it to the Marquis himself. “I am your debtor, Marquis,” he began, after he had finished the letter, “but let that give you no uneasiness. “Allow me but a respite of twenty days, and you shall be paid.” “Gracious Prince!” exclaimed Civitella, with feeling and surprise, “do I deserve this?” “You did not choose to remind me of my engagement. I know your delicacy in this matter, and

thank you for your liberality. In twenty days, as I said before, you shall be paid." "What is the meaning of all this?" said Civitella with anxiety. "Explain to me this mystery. I cannot comprehend it."

We gave him all the information in our power. He fell into a rage. The Prince, he said, must insist upon satisfaction: the offence is infamous. In the mean time, he conjured the Prince to make use of his property and credit as if they were his own. The Marquis left us, and the Prince still continued silent. He walked with hasty steps up and down the room: something of an extraordinary nature seemed to oppress his senses. At last he stood still, and murmured incoherently — "Wish yourself happiness — at nine o'clock he died."

We looked at him with horror. "Wish yourself happiness," he continued. "Happiness—Did he not say so? What was it that he meant by these words?" "Why do you now repeat that foolish admonition?" I exclaimed, "What has this to do with it?" "I could not then understand what the Arinenian meant by that expression. Now I comprehend him. Oh, it is intolerably hard to have a master over one!" "My dearest Prince!" "Who can make me experience it!—Ah! it must be exquisite!"

He stopped again. There was in his countenance a wildness resembling insanity. I never before had seen him so much agitated. "The most miserable among the people," he continued, "or the next Prince to the throne! are the same. There is but one distinction among men — to obey or to govern." He once more looked into the letter. "You have seen the man," he continued, "who has ventured to write thus to me. Would you salute him in the street if fate had not made him your master? By heavens! there is something wonderfully great about the wearer of a crown!" He continued speaking in this unintelligible manner for some time, and many of his words I dare not commit to paper. But the Prince has discovered to me a circumstance, which involved me in surprise and anxiety, and which may probably ere long lead to bad consequences. We were ignorant of the family circumstances at the court of * * * until now. The Prince

answered the letter upon the spot, though I opposed it with violence, and the manner in which he has done it will, in all probability, prevent a reconciliation.

You will also be desirous, dear O —, to hear something about the Greek lady. I can say but little upon that subject, as I am not able at present to learn any thing satisfactory concerning her. The Prince discloses nothing, because he is, no doubt, bound to secrecy, as I presume, by his word of honour. But she is not the Greek lady that we supposed. She is a German of noble extraction. It is reported that she has a mother of rank, and also that she is the fruit of an illicit connection, of which much was said in Europe. Clandestine pursuits, it is said, have forced her to seek refuge at Venice; and these also are the reasons why she avoids society, and secretes herself in a private dwelling, where it would have been impossible for the Prince to have discovered her. The veneration with which the Prince speaks of her, and certain traits which he observes in her conduct, seem to authorise this presumption. He is passionately fond of her, and his attachment increases every day. In the first outset the visits were not repeated very often; however, the second week the interval was shortened, and now not a day passes without the Prince's being there. We are not able to see him sometimes for whole evenings together; and even, if he is not in her society, she is the only object that occupies his attention. His nature seems to be changed. He walks about like a madman: he is inattentive to every thing that formerly interested him.

What will be the consequence, dearest friend, I cannot imagine. The quarrel with his court has thrown my master into the degrading situation of being dependent upon an individual, the Marquis Civitella. He is at present master of all our secrets, and perhaps of our fate. Will he always think so nobly as he does at present? Will this good understanding be of long duration? and is it right to give so much power and consequence to a man, let him be ever so excellent a character? A letter has been despatched to the sister of the Prince. The issue of it I hope to communicate to you in my next letter.

The Count O——, in continuation.

But this promised letter never arrived. Three whole months passed over, before I obtained any farther accounts from Venice ; an interruption which is explained in the sequel. All the letters of my friend to me had been suppressed. You may guess the situation of my mind, when, in the month of December, I obtained the following writing, which mere accident (Biondello's illness) brought to my hands.

" You do not write. You do not answer.—Come—Oh, come upon the wings of friendship. Our hope is gone. Read this with resolution. All our hope is gone. The Marquis's wound is mortal. The Cardinal cries for revenge, and his assassins seek the Prince's life. My master—Oh, my unhappy master ! Is it come to this ? Unworthy, terrible fate ! We must fly like criminals from the poniards of murderers. I write to you from the Convent ***, where the Prince has taken refuge. He is lying asleep upon a mattress by my side. Alas ! it is the slumber of exhausted nature, which will soon again resign him to the horror of new sufferings. During the ten days that she was ill, no sleep closed his eyes. I was present at the dissection of the body. They discovered traces of poison. To-day she will be buried.

" Alas, dear O——, my heart is almost broken. I was witness to a scene that never will be rooted from my memory. I stood by her dying bed. She expired with divine resignation, and her last words hailed her beloved to accompany her to the throne of heaven. All our resolution forsook us ; the Prince alone was firm and collected ; and though he must have suffered almost beyond description, yet he had fortitude enough to refuse the pious fanatic her last prayer."

In this was enclosed the following :—

*To the Prince ***, from his Sister.*

" The religion which the Prince *** has embraced will not let him want the means to continue his present mode of

life, which is to be attributed to that alone. I have tears and prayers for an unfortunate, but no more benefits for one unworthy of them.

“ HENRIETTE.”

I set off immediately ; and travelling night and day, in the third week I arrived at Venice. My haste was of no consequence. I went to comfort an unhappy being ; but I found one who did not want my feeble assistance. F—— was very ill, and was not to be spoken with, when I arrived ; they gave me, however, the following note : —

“ Return, dear O——, to where you came from. The Prince does not want your assistance nor mine. His debts are paid, the Cardinal consoled, and the Marquis restored. Do you remember the Armenian who entrapped us last year so dexterously ? In his power you ’ll find the Prince ; who has these five days attended mass.”

Notwithstanding this, I waited upon the Prince, but was refused admittance. On the bed of my friend, however, I heard the following extraordinary history. After taking my lodgings, not far from the Prince’s hotel, I was obliged to wait a long time before I could speak with my friend F——. He was indisposed with a fever, and the physician that attended him despaired of his recovery. My situation was afflicting in the extreme ; for I beheld the Prince, as it were, upon the verge of a most terrible abyss, and my friend F—— on the brink of the grave. Harassed almost to death with misfortunes, I resolved, at all events, to speak once more with the Prince ; but I found, after several ineffectual attempts, that it was in vain ; and the last visit I made I was dismissed with the following intimation :—“ That the Prince was not to be spoken to by me, and that it was alone owing to his former attachment for me that I still enjoyed my liberty.”

Biondello, who told me this, added to the weight of his information, by his serious and strongly marked countenance. I was not able to make him any answer, but felt my knees shake under me, and my lips quiver in a convulsive manner. I went immediately to my lodgings, and, almost insensible with apprehension, threw myself into an arm chair,

and endeavoured to dispel the gloom of anticipation that hung over me. A noise brought me at last to myself; I looked up, and saw the physician who attended F—— standing before me, whom I had not heard enter the room during my perplexity. “I like to be myself the messenger of happy news,” said he to me, “and I come to announce to you, that your friend F—— finds himself so much recovered, that he is able to converse without difficulty, and wishes to speak to you; the cause of his illness seems to be entirely removed, but you must expect to see him weak, and rather low.” I did not suffer him to proceed in his speech, but wrapped myself up in a cloak, and hastened to congratulate my friend upon his recovery, with as much satisfaction as if the welfare of millions had depended upon my walk.

“Oh! how much have I sighed after you, my dear O——,” said he, with a feeble voice, as he pressed my hand to his breast; “but the physician conjured me, until now, to avoid all sensations.” I looked at him. He was lying before me the picture of death. A tear started from my eye; I could not suppress it: he observed it. “I thank you, my friend, for this sincere proof of affection; it convinces me that my loss will not be indifferent to you.” “Speak not of your death,” said I, with concern, “the physician assures me he has removed your complaint, and that in a little time you will be well again.” “Ay,” he replied, with a deep sigh, “he has repeatedly said so, but I think the contrary. My internal feelings prove to me that I cannot exist long in this world.”

He sank back on his pillow. A cold sweat stood upon his forehead. His speech became fainter by degrees; but I collected sufficient to understand, that he suspected some one had poisoned him, for that he and myself had been suspected for some time of having maliciously and secretly calumniated the Prince at court. This accounted for the cold and unfriendly treatment I had lately received from the Prince; and the very thought of being subject to so powerful an enemy threw me into a state of melancholy. I looked back upon my conduct, and tried to recollect any circumstance that might throw some light upon the matter, but in vain. In the midst of these reflections F——

awaked, which aroused me from my lethargy. His first word was to entreat me to be secret as to what he had discovered respecting himself, and persuaded me, fearful that a similar lot would befall me, to absent myself immediately after his death from Venice. He added, with a smile, "See me laid in my grave first, for I wish very much to receive that last service from the hand of a friend whom I affectionately love." I embraced him, and bedewed his death-pale cheek with tears. "I forgive those," he said, "who are the cause of my death; it will not be painful to me; and as you have not deprived me of your presence in my last hours, I owe you the greatest thanks."

A long pause ensued;—after that, F—— related to me as follows. I have collected into a narrative the sentences which he spoke at intervals, and added what I extorted from him by questions; for his feebleness did not permit him to speak in a continued series. I also was often obliged to assist him, on account of the defect of his memory, as far as it could be done by questions. I must be permitted to introduce him speaking here, because, of all that I communicate, nothing is done by me but the chronological arrangement. I have, indeed, given myself the trouble to use his own language, which I am enabled to do, as I had my pocket-book always in my hand, and carefully noted down every thing which I thought would slip from my memory.

"I begin," said F——, "my story from that period when my letters to you were intercepted. By the last of them* you know, that the Prince had fallen out with his court, and had nothing more to expect from thence. His sister did not write to him, and left us for the space of two months in an anxious state of uncertainty, when the letter, which I enclosed for you last, arrived. It threw the Prince into the most horrid state of distress. His debt to Civitella was very much increased, and his expenses were not in the least diminished; and we found there was not any probability of maintaining the system much longer.—I must confess to you, that at that period I seldom enjoyed a happy hour. In the most splendid entertainments I was solitary,

* That for the month of September. See the foregoing.

and sunk in deep reflection. Z—— contented himself as well as he could. If he was not obliged to be at home, from necessity, he seldom stayed with me; and if at any time I mentioned the subject of our distress to him, he never listened to me, but answered, that he did not choose to interfere in his master's concerns. I had no friend left; and from you I received no answers to my letters. The Prince was seldom to be seen, being in general occupied with Biondello, upon the management of his intrigues. He must have had no other thought than that of visiting the Greek lady, for he had already promised four times to the Marquis to pay him; but instead of that, he borrowed fresh sums. You know formerly with what strict punctuality he performed a promise; but at that period he was completely inattentive to it.

"It was as if every thing existed only for him, and that he had the sole right to command it. The Marquis still continued the generous, disinterested friend of the Prince, who studied his wishes, before they came to maturity, and sought, with unremitting zeal, to satisfy him in every particular. In his hands, I may say, our fate rested; and yet he knew how to give his conduct such a colour, that an indifferent person would have thought his existence depended upon a single look from the Prince. Thus stood the affair, when the Prince one evening came home very late from the *Bucentauro*. He brought a book with him, the contents of which he was so anxious to be acquainted with, that, during the time he was undressing, he desired me to read it out aloud to him; for Biondello, on whom this honour was usually conferred, under the pretext of indisposition, which he had complained of for fourteen nights, had been dismissed to go to bed. At last the Prince retired to rest, and being unable to repose until the book was finished, I was obliged to sit upon the side of his bed and continue my task. He listened very attentively, as he supported his head upon his right arm. The clock in the steeple of St. Mark's church struck one.* At that instant

* The Count O—— has probably given here the hour in which this happened, according to our reckoning of time; in Venice, and other provinces of Italy, they begin to count the hours from *one*, at the beginning of the night.

both the candles which stood before me upon the table were extinguished. We heard thunder, which in a few minutes became so violent, that the house seemed to shake under us ; quick flashes of lightning illuminated our room, and immediately all the windows and doors burst open.

“ ‘ *Beware, Prince ! that thou dost not stain thy hand with blood,* ’ cried a hollow frightful voice — Again it thundered and lightened, after which a solemn stillness reigned for some time.

“ ‘ Is this a dream ? ’ — cried the Prince, after a pause. I did not make any answer, and was in doubt whether I should quit the room or not. In the mean time Biondello rushed in. ‘ For God’s sake, what is the matter ? ’ he exclaimed with trepidation ; but, without waiting for an answer, he took the wax candles from the table, and brought them back lighted. He was half dressed, and appeared so dreadfully frightened, that I became very much alarmed for him. Observing that the Prince had not received any injury, he seemed in some measure comforted. The Prince asked him if he had heard any thing ? He answered in the affirmative, and his relation accorded exactly with what we had heard ; however, he did not see any lightning. He was not asleep, and for that reason his evidence effectually proved, that our imaginations had not deceived us. Biondello received orders to go to bed again, and the Prince commanded him to observe the strictest silence as to what he had heard and seen. ‘ What do you think of this ? ’ said the Prince, as soon as he was gone. ‘ I must own to you, gracious Prince,’ said I, ‘ that this event has almost deprived me of my senses.’ ‘ Confess, that you will not willingly believe it to be a miracle, because you know that I hold them in contempt.’ ‘ And yet I know not how to explain it in a natural way.’ ‘ We have read strange things in the book ; how, if our fancy should have played us a trick ? ’ ‘ But that we both heard one and the same thing, that the candles in the mean time were extinguished at the same moment, and doors and windows burst open, is certain ; and Biondello has heard the same ? ’

“ ‘ That might, perhaps, be explained. The windows burst open because they were not fastened ; the door from

the same cause; the pressure of the air became then stronger, and the thorough draft put out the candles.' 'But the words we heard—the lightning—the thunder?' 'I ascribe them to imagination.' 'But could imagination work upon *three* different persons exactly at the *same* time, and in the *same* manner?' 'If all our ideas turn to the same point, why not?—Have you never heard, that whole societies have been deceived in the same manner? To what cause else can we ascribe the existence of so many fanatics?' 'I allow this; but Biondello's ideas could not surely be similar to ours, and yet—' 'It is possible. Have you not heard that he was lying awake in his bed, and in all probability listened to every thing that was said? Only a thin wainscot separates his room from mine, and you, besides, read with a very loud voice.'

"I became silent, not because I was convinced, but because I did not like to contradict him; for his countenance proved to me that he was angry at my disputing the question with him. He seemed satisfied, but the recollection of what had passed banished sleep from my eyes. The following day was destined for a grand feast, which was given in honour of the Prince of St. Benedetto. All that Venetian splendour and pleasure could invent was united here. It was to conclude with a very brilliant masquerade ball. A valet-de-chambre, whom the Prince a short time ago took into his service, because he saved his life, remained alone at home; whilst myself and the Prince's whole household, Biondello not excepted, who forgot his complaints to join the party, went to the entertainment. The Prince was pleased with his attention so much the more, because, in spite of his indisposition, he insisted upon going in such a manner that the greatest love for his Prince could only have induced him. In the mask of a Bramin he followed him every where, at a little distance, like his shadow. I did not suffer him to go out of my sight, because I expected something might take place, that might lead to a discovery of the mysterious warning we had heard the foregoing night; to which ground I also attributed the foresight of Biondello. My conjecture was but too well founded. The crowd of masks which were present left little room in the spacious hall for the dancers;

thus, they were rather crowded. The Prince, in endeavouring to pass some one in great haste, tore a part of his garment. He was obliged to leave the hall immediately to repair the accident. Biondello conducted him into a side room, and I followed. Picture to yourself our astonishment, when we beheld, in a recess, the Greek lady and Civitella conversing together. Not one of us was able to utter a word. The Prince seemed thunderstruck : his eyes rolled wildly in his head, and the muscles of his face became convulsive. The couple apparently did not observe us. Before we could prevent him, the Prince seized a dagger, which lay upon a table, and rushing towards Civitella laid him bleeding at his feet. The Greek lady ran with loud shrieks into the hall.

“ ‘ For God’s sake, save yourself, gracious Prince ! ’ exclaimed Biondello, ‘ lose not a moment.’ At that instant he laid hold of the Prince, who was quite stupified, and hurried him away through a side-door. I hastened after them. Scarcely was the door closed, when we heard a great noise in the room. In their embarrassment they had probably forgotten to pursue us ; we therefore made our escape. The Prince wished to go to his hotel, but Biondello prevented him, and added that he could not be secure there. The powers above* punish very rigorously any one that attacks a mask ; and in spite of his rank, he was in doubt whether they would not to-morrow morning send after him one of their *fantes*†, which might have very bad consequences. He promised to conduct him to a place of security till the affair could be settled. Biondello walked before us with hasty steps ; we followed him very close, and I must confess, with great dread and anxiety. The apprehension played upon my fancy so much, that I saw at every step figures, which seemed to me all armed with daggers. From the Prince’s countenance, I easily could perceive, that he also was very much discouraged. Not one of us spoke a word. Like fugitive criminals we stole

* This expression, or, in his language, *quci in alto*, the Venetians use as a name for the tribunal of the Inquisition. A Venetian is so afraid of that word, that he makes use of it only in cases of great necessity, and speaks of this tribunal with the highest veneration and beating heart.

† An officer of this tribunal.

through the private passages and by-streets. We were fortunate enough to meet, near *St. Samuele*, a boat, which, to all appearance, seemed waiting for us. We stepped into it: Biondello commanded the boatman to row into the *Sestier of Castello*, and to land us near *St. Francisco della Vigna*, a Franciscan convent. We glided like lightning through the water. Houses and steeples that bordered the river soon vanished from our sight. The moon shone with beautiful splendour; and, at intervals, we heard the distant oars as they dashed into the stream, and the melancholy song of the *Barcarole*.*—I shall never forget the impression that night made upon my mind.

“We arrived, at last, at the before-mentioned place; and Biondello procured us, even at that time of night, through the means of an acquaintance, the best accommodation. We were obliged to live there in great secrecy, and I observed that the Prince deeply felt his situation. Biondello walked out in different masks to learn how the matter stood, and what the Prince had to fear; but for many days he returned without success. At last he came into the room, about night-fall, in great agitation. ‘We must depart hence,’ he cried with a trembling voice, ‘we must depart this moment! Your life hangs on a thread, my Prince! The Marquis is mortally wounded; the Cardinal has hired twelve assassins to murder you, and he who perpetrates the deed is promised one hundred sequins; a price which an assassin would be studious to earn, were it even to take the life of the head of the church. They already are acquainted with our abode—we must hasten away as quickly as possible!’

“Had not Biondello been with us, we could not possibly have escaped our fate; but this indefatigable and attentive man assisted us always with the best advice. He brought us clothes, as a disguise, and we hired a boat for our conveyance. Biondello entered into conversation with

* *Barcarole* are a kind of watermen. They sing for entertainment, whilst they are lying solitarily in their boats, expecting customers. They know by heart many passages of the poets, and add to them music of their own composition, which they endeavour to make adequate to the words. One is heard to begin; another, who perhaps does not know the first, hears, and answers him, and they seldom discontinue their song till their business calls them away.

the waterman, and we experienced, to our astonishment, in what great danger we were placed, and how industrious the assassins were to earn the hundred sequins. Suspecting that some one might be able, by the boatman, to trace our route, to deceive them, we continually changed our boat, and went a very circuitous way about. At last we arrived at the convent —. A friendly monk, also an acquaintance of Biondello, received us at the gate, and conducted us immediately to a room, which was retired and clean, but not furnished for the reception of a prince. ‘A lady, in the last agonies of death, wishes to speak to you,’ said the monk the next day to the Prince. He started as if he had suffered an electrical stroke. ‘Who is she?’ he exclaimed hastily. ‘I do not know; I have not enquired concerning that. She has lived for two years in this convent. Whence she came is unknown. It is our duty to receive every stranger, within our walls, without first asking who he is, or whence he comes.— We suffer every one to keep his secret, if he will not discover it to us willingly.’

“The Prince seemed lost in deep reflection. ‘How long has she been ill?’ he said at last. ‘To-day is the seventh.’ ‘Where is she? I will go to her.’ He followed the monk.

“In the sick room, my dear friend, was his Greek lady. I have forgotten to mention, that he had not an opportunity to speak to her for two days previous to the unhappy masquerade-ball; it was clear now what detained her. I myself saw her, and I am not able to describe my feelings, when I beheld the most charming creature in the creation, who was formerly the admiration of every one, but now the victim of horror and disease. Upon her lovely face were marked the signs of death. — I no longer doubted, that at the ball we must have been mistaken in the person; but the Prince, in total opposition to his former character, still entertained his doubts. This affected his sensibility to such a degree, that nothing could be equal to it. His ardent affection threw him into the most violent paroxysms of despair, when he saw the object of his heart in the arms of death; but, in a few minutes, the fatal scene at the ball

rushed upon his mind — he turned from her with disgust, impressed with the idea that she had treated his love with scorn. His eyes sparkled with rage, and, as in agony, his limbs trembled; but this, when he looked upon the patient innocent, was changed into sympathetic melancholy. His situation was terrible. Although she herself suffered very much, she sought to console him. This circumstance almost drove him to distraction. I tore him by force from her bed. He sat silent in our room for some time; at last he exclaimed — ‘I am shamefully deceived! She, whom I adored, despised me, and rioted licentiously in the arms of another.’

“ ‘Gracious Prince, be satisfied. All circumstances clearly prove, that she was lying ill here when the deed happened. It must have been quite a different person.’ ‘Did I not see her — I, who preserved in the sanctuary of my heart the smallest of her favours — I, who existed only for her, who thought her one and the same with myself — to be treated thus!’ — ‘Pardon me, gracious Prince, did you not say yourself, that under such circumstances, one might be easily deceived?’ ‘Did you not see her also?’ ‘Your rash action hindered us from observing her minutely.’ ‘And how came she to know that I was in the convent? The plan is finely laid to decoy me again into the net; but it will not succeed!’ ‘Do not mistrust her. — An unhappy affair brought us hither; and, meeting her in such a pitiable situation, must have operated strongly upon your mind, and —’ ‘Will you remind me of my weakness? I believed, from the first moment, that it was a juggle.’ ‘Her illness a juggle?’ ‘Is that impossible, after having had the experience that we have?’

“ I know not how long this conversation would have lasted; for the more I endeavoured to convince him of his error, so much the more he opposed me; and his understanding, formerly so enlightened, did not look upon what appeared the fact as at all probable. Biondello’s arrival prevented a continuation of our discourse. He did not, however, bring news of our being safe; yet the Prince became, in one respect, more composed. For, he said it was in several places reported, that the lady, on account of

whom we had suffered so much, was no other person than a certain V—lli, who was of an indifferent character, and extremely like the Greek lady. The similarity of the dress, and the darkness of the room in which they were sitting, served also to deceive us. How his beloved knew that he was in the convent, was also explained to his satisfaction. One of her footmen had discovered Biondello — she had often made particular enquiries after the Prince, and having discovered his retreat, desired once more to see and speak to her beloved. Conscious of her innocence, her sufferings made a greater impression upon the mind of the Prince. He very seldom quitted her bed, and gave himself up entirely to sorrow. The cause of her dissolution will also be that of mine.— Oh! that I might die with the tranquillity that she did! Her patience under her sufferings, her serenity of mind, when the shadows of death surrounded her, contributed to make her more beloved than ever. Oh! that I might be certain of such a happy death as hers! * This angel died by poison; for, on the dissection of her body, at which I was obliged to be present, the clearest proofs of it were visible.†

“ The situation of the Prince I am not able to describe to you. I trembled for his safety; for when he saw the corpse carried to the grave, he burst into a loud hysterical laugh, and, as in a fit of madness, uttered expressions that I never wish to recollect. Several days passed, in which nothing remarkable happened. Biondello’s accounts were always the same, and the Marquis had not yet recovered from his indisposition. We did not perceive that they were at all solicitous to discover us, although he assured us, that they had not yet given over the pursuit; and that our safety depended upon our remaining quiet; for their revenge would not be satisfied but by blood. For want of room I was obliged to sleep in the Prince’s apartment. It was about midnight when he came to my bedside and waked me.

“ ‘ Have you heard nothing?’ said he. — I replied in the negative, for I had slept very soundly, my rest having been

* This wish of my friend was fulfilled in every particular.

† He has already mentioned this in his last letter. See the foregoing.

broken the preceding night. 'Has any thing happened to you, gracious Sir?' 'Had I not the proof in my hands, I should think it was a dream. It seems as if I am surrounded every where by invisible beings. I was just on the point of falling asleep, when I was disturbed by the most enchanting music. Whilst I listened to find whence the sound came, a genius appeared to descend through the upper part of my bed, graced with all the charms with which our painters usually represent them; but no pencil ever portrayed such a perfection of irresistible beauty. A soft light surrounded it, and illuminated my bed. I had drawn the curtain very close. The night lamp burnt faintly, and on witnessing this apparition, I reflected upon the former prophecy, which, alas! was so punctually fulfilled. I remained lost in astonishment and fear. With a melodious voice it spoke to me: — *My lord and master sends thee a letter; open and read it, but not before the first beam of the sun announces day, and conquer all disbelief!* He let fall a letter, and melted, as it were, into a cloud, which vanished by degrees. His disappearance was accompanied by the same agreeable music as announced his approach, and a rich perfume diffused itself around me.

"The Prince showed me the letter. It was exactly like a common letter; only the seal consisted of several symbols, which we could not explain, and it was not directed. He put it into his pocket. 'Will you not open it?' said I. 'To-morrow at the appointed hour.' 'You believe, then, in this apparition?' He was silent for a while. 'Must I not? — Oh! what would I give if I could but still doubt it, and persevere in that philosophy, of which I boasted so much! Now I must give up all. I believe now in every thing! Can I do otherwise, after what has happened to me?'

"He slept no more that night, but conversed of ghosts and supernatural appearances; and I soon experienced how much he inclined to believe in the possibility of them. At the appointed time he took the letter from his pocket, and, behold, there was a direction upon it! This, although a trifle, greatly astonished the Prince; and you may easily conceive how he was affected at the moment. He opened it. It was a mere cover; but there was enclosed a receipt

from Civitella, not only for the sums which he had lent to the Prince, but also for the interest ; and a letter from him of which I will give you a copy ; I transcribed it on account of its singularity :—

‘ My gracious Prince !

‘ The enormity of my crime is so great, that I ask of you forgiveness, and hope your heart will not deny it, as my repose and future happiness depend upon it. You punished my imprudence, at that unfortunate ball, by a severe blow ; and I, like a madman, suffered myself to be overcome by rage, and thirsted for revenge. After the abominable custom of this country, I begged of my uncle to hire a party of banditti to kill *you*—the saviour of my life. The thought oppresses me with horror ; but you, who gave the wound, were also able to cure it, and could have done it by one word !—Oh ! you, at whose command the higher powers wait, why do you fly from my weak unpardonable revenge, which you could have suppressed at pleasure ?—Why did you send me the sums of money, which I lent you with such satisfaction, thus to deprive me of the consolation, which you at first so nobly gave me ? Whilst you thought me worthy to share with you my fortune, you did not want it.—Oh ! act with generosity and forgive me, for, without that, my recovery will be to me the most unhappy period of my life. I cannot excuse my temerity ; no, I am not able to do it—but you will be less indignant at my conduct, if you consider that it is by education alone such a detestable self-revenge can be justified. Am I not by such appearances punished enough ?—Alas ! the recollection of it will never be rooted from my memory. As I lay upon my bed, suffering the most excruciating pain, and the bystanders expecting my death every moment, there appeared to me a figure, in a long black Tartar dress, and girded round the loins with a golden belt. It approached near to my bed : its white beard flowed upon its breast, and a penetrating frown sat upon its brow : it looked around, and immediately my attendants sunk to sleep. *Wretch!*—it cried, with a terrible voice—*who has ventured to persecute him with vengeance, who could instantly destroy thy*

life, if he would make use of the power he has in his hands? I will not repeat the dreadful remonstrance which I heard. It was a miracle that I did not expire under the agitation this appearance occasioned. Having struggled for some time in the most terrible torments, the figure touched me. I was instantly free from pain, and perfectly recovered. Before me, on the table, were lying heaps of gold, for which I was obliged to give a receipt. It also desired me to ask your pardon in writing, though I did not know where to address you, and upon which my whole welfare would depend. Oh! do not refuse your compassion to a miserable wretch. — When and how you will obtain this letter I do not know; but the spirit assured me that you would, for certain, have it. Alas, gracious Prince! return to me again. For, with sincere repentance, an unworthy being will wait upon you in the ante-chamber of your hotel, as soon as day breaks.

‘Your unworthy friend,
‘CIVITELLA.’

“What we felt on reading that letter I need not, dear O—— describe to you. It was an event which filled us with astonishment. The Prince did not doubt the fact; but he would not quit his haunt, without first having made all possible enquiry as to its authenticity. Biondello, who was still asleep, was called, and commissioned to enquire very cautiously into every circumstance. The voice immediately repeated,—‘Overcome your disbelief!’ Biondello crossed himself, and went off. He did not go far from the convent, for he heard from his spies, that we were perfectly safe; and he soon returned with this happy news. The Prince conjured us to be silent as to what had happened, and set off immediately. We arrived at the hotel, and found not only Civitella but also the Cardinal, who came towards the Prince, and, in the humblest manner, asked his pardon. That he forgave them willingly, and was highly satisfied to free himself from such a dangerous dilemma, is easily to be imagined. Nor did he undeceive them as to the idea, that higher powers were at his command, and that the ghost had appeared to Civitella by his

desire ; he only begged of them to keep it a secret. Civitella assured him that it was quite public, for the people who waited upon him knew it, and had already cried him up as a saint.

“ ‘But the people were asleep, how could they discover the vision?’ replied the Prince, with some doubt. ‘Yes, gracious Prince,’ said Civitella—‘but they saw the form descending into the room, and witnessed, on their recovering from their terror, my restoration. They saw me at the brink of the grave; and to be restored so suddenly, must have excited their astonishment; and can you blame me, that in the moment when I found myself snatched from the jaws of death, I called you, with gratitude, my benefactor?—You did not prohibit me to do it; and had that been the case, I believe I should have violated your commands. Oh! most gracious Prince! there is no greater pain than for an uncorrupted mind to suppress the feelings of a grateful heart!’ He threw himself at the feet of the Prince, whilst tears burst from his eyes. ‘I have already forgiven you,’ said the Prince, raising him from the ground. ‘But, am I beloved by you as formerly?—Am I not unworthy of it?’ he continued in tears. ‘When I forgive, I do it not by halves,’ said the Prince, embracing him.

“Life now seemed to beam afresh in the Marquis. He did not even appear to have been at all ill, for he looked as healthy as ever; but a fixed melancholy, that was discernible in his countenance, extinguished those traces of benevolence which had formerly rendered him so attractive. But by this reconciliation he recovered his happy looks, and ran through the room in an excess of joy that indicated his felicity. After the first intoxication was over, he was overwhelmed with an agreeable anxiety, which did not at all belong to his character, and from which one could perceive how much he felt his indiscretion. This, and the solicitude which originated with it, made him more agreeable to the Prince, and he became to him as dear as ever: he understood the smallest hint; he sought to read in his eyes his most distant wishes, and soon learned how to regulate his conduct according to his desires; besides, he sufficiently understood how to give

his actions an air of duty, and continually exclaimed how much he owed to the Prince. Believing that the Prince's violence upon the night of the ball was nothing more than a punishment for his extravagancies—(for he did not conceive that the Prince had taken the lady that was with him for his Grecian)—he now altered his mode of life, and often thanked the Prince that he had punished him so severely. He declared that he was proud of it—that he esteemed him higher than ever, and thought him more worthy of his friendship. He candidly confessed to me, that he had at that time entertained an idea, which would in the end have been his ruin. He had laid a plan to seduce the daughter of the —t—io, a charming innocent girl of sixteen. He had seen her, for the first time, at mass, and her beauty impressed him with this resolution.

“To gain access to the house of her parents, and to succeed in this diabolical scheme, he was obliged to court the favour of the same lady with whom we had seen him at the ball, because she was a near relation to the family, and could easily introduce him. The strictness with which she was watched would have required him to commit a chain of crimes before he could have obtained his aim. His passion was so violent, that, united with his natural imprudence, he did not hesitate to adopt the most impolite manners to accomplish his purpose. At the brink of the grave, he added, a man reflects upon all his actions in another point of view; and even those that formerly gave him great pleasure, and upon which he had often spoken with delight, pierced him to the very soul with horror.

“Oh! dearest friend, Civitella is, notwithstanding all his licentiousness, a noble man, and, if he commits a fault, he knows how to compensate for it, in such a manner, that one must attribute it to him as a great action. From his discourse, and from his answers to my questions, I could distinctly perceive, that it was not him, but the Cardinal his uncle, who caused the banditti to pursue us so industriously; but he generously took all upon himself, and endeavoured to prevent us from discovering the truth. It is much to be lamented, that so superior an understanding,

with such a good heart, and such an enchanting appearance, must perish upon a Venetian soil.*

"It is a singular thing, considering the bad education which the children of the nobility receive, from the most stupid and rudest sort of priests, called abbés, that he was so enlightened, or possessed of that sensibility, which gives to all his actions so much captivating interest. I have neglected to mention, that curiosity induced us to ask the Marquis to show us the place where he had been wounded. He opened his shirt, and, to our great surprise, we perceived that there was not any appearance of a wound, or the smallest mark of any violence."

Continuation of Count O——.

My friend exhausted himself so much by his relation, that all the powers of nature seemed suspended. My doubts were but too well founded; he appeared to sleep, but it was that of death—my tears are sacrificed to his memory! He was a man of fine ideas; but from the goodness of his heart, and an unsuspecting disposition, he became so much the easier a prey to his enemies, whose dislike to him arose from his attachment to his master. I was now left alone in a great city, possessed of no friend to whom I could communicate my thoughts, and was obliged to take particular care not to talk with any one but upon common topics, because I presumed, and with reason, that I was surrounded by spies, who would put a false construction upon my words, and make that a plea for poisoning me. The death of my friend had made me cautious. His earnest request, that I would quit the place, and the message that the Prince sent to me by Biondello, now preyed upon my mind with double force; my sorrow also contributed, in a great measure, to aid my determin-

* My friend here goes too far. Although the sciences at Venice are in a bad state, for want of encouragement, there, however, are open to an enquiring mind very considerable libraries, from which a man may gain a great deal of useful knowledge. But the case is, that they will not make use of them. And the young nobleman, who intends to fit himself for the service of the state, has to study history and politics; a few departments, which, if they are filled up, require talents and industry, and are equally useful and necessary for those whom their birth has destined for the government of the republic. Thus has my friend praised the talents of the Marquis; they seem, however, to me to be more of a glittering nature than founded upon learning. COUNT O——

ation. I resolved to leave Venice. I locked myself up in my room for a few days, and then forsook a city in which I had lost two beloved friends. Before I went, I sent to the Prince a card of departure.

I had travelled about sixty Italian miles, when the idea that I might possibly save the Prince, obliged me to return. I was irresistibly compelled to act in this manner; for my mind, ever anxious for his safety, represented to me in black colours all that might befall him; and I looked upon it as criminal not to endeavour to rescue him. Fixed in this resolution, I entered upon the execution of my plan, without once considering the dangers and difficulties which surrounded such an undertaking. I took the precaution, however, for fear of being discovered, to dismiss my faithful servant, and the only one I had taken with me. I parted from him with deep regret; for he alone had sometimes, by his compassionate fidelity, afforded me consolation. I was now obliged to go without companionship: but it was absolutely necessary. He was an incomparably good servant; but he had one fault, which I could not break him of, although he had served me twenty years, and which was in opposition to every principle of my scheme,—he could not keep a secret. What he knew he published to the whole world; and, though he did not tell it in direct terms, his actions and behaviour betrayed it to every one he was acquainted with, if he thought well of them, and fancied they were possessed of the same goodness of heart as himself. It could not but happen that he was very often deceived, but this did not make him at all more prudent. To put unbounded confidence in every one was his maxim, from which he never departed; for he used to say, that he should feel it severely if he was suspected by any one; and for that reason he thought it would be the same to others: and that the whole world trusted him he was convinced. He believed every one that was at all reserved in his conduct to be free from guile. If one expressly told him to be silent upon any subject, he became anxious not to let any thing drop that could betray him, which never failed to lead him into an error. For he had always in his mind, and at his

tongue's end, what he should not discover, and very often repeated to himself my prohibition; and it frequently happened that he acted thus in society, and said to himself, loudly and significantly, "Caspar, don't forget that your master has told you so and so—" (and immediately mentioned the thing which he ought to have kept a secret,) "you must not chatter out what he has prohibited you to mention."

He no sooner heard that it was public than he maintained firmly that he had told it to nobody. This serious fault was, however, balanced by his other good qualities, which induced me to keep him. At first I thought of dismissing him my service, as I was not accustomed to put up with such conduct. I used to practise an artifice upon him, which succeeded extremely well, as he was obliged to keep every thing he heard a secret. I related to him, at the same time, something that was unconnected with the subject, and desired him particularly not to mention it: by that means I deceived him, and the subject I wished to be a secret was forgotten. I did not mention to him my determination respecting him; but wrote a letter, and sent him forward with it, under the pretext of bespeaking quarters for me. He was obliged to deliver this letter to a landlord at —, with whom I had frequently lodged, and who knew him to be an honest man. I requested him to inform my servant that I had thrown myself into a river. I enclosed a bank-note, and commanded him to make the inn his home; begging of him, at the same time, not to make any enquiries after me. To preserve appearances, and to give him an idea that it grieved me to part from him, I wrote an affectionate farewell-letter to him, and begged of him again to fulfil my last and particular request.

Poor Caspar's case was extremely hard; but I was under the necessity of treating him in that manner. Had I told him that I was obliged to part with him, on account of my intention to travel privately, he would have sought me every where, and would have enquired of every body, whether they had seen or heard any thing of me; my hiding-place, by that means, would have been discovered,

and my death the certain consequence. I was convinced that he would punctually fulfil my last request, and it would be very easy for me to find him again when I wanted him. I begged of him to be comforted; that he would not commit suicide I was convinced; for the respect which he had for the last request of a deceased friend was uncommonly great. I hope my readers will pardon this digression; Caspar was my faithful servant, and deserves more than this poor tribute for his gratitude.

After hesitating a considerable time, (suspicious, probably of my intention,) Caspar separated from me. With the greatest emotion I looked after him until he disappeared. I was now left alone. Quite undetermined which road I should take, I departed for —. On the day of my arrival, I heard that, in the evening, there was to be a masquerade ball; and a thought struck me, which I immediately put in execution. I bought the habit of a Polish Jew, ornamented my chin with a large beard, coloured my eyebrows and face, and wandered thus towards Venice. The goods which I was possessed of, and my horse, I turned into money, and secreted it, with some jewels, in my belt. I did not doubt my ability to play my character faithfully; for I had been a long while in Poland, and had dealt with the Jews; inclination too, partly, as well as necessity, induced me to learn their language, in which I was so well skilled, that I have, even by the Jews themselves, been taken for one of their tribe. I travelled the greatest part of the way on foot, and about twenty miles from Venice entered an inn, where I met poor Caspar. He was sitting in a corner of the room, and seemed totally absorbed in thought. I was anxious to avoid being seen by him, and, for that reason, was about absenting myself from the room, when he came towards me, and asked me from whence I came? This made me bolder, and I told him the place where I had passed the night before. The word was scarcely out of my mouth, when he enquired if I had not seen his master? "No," I answered quickly, and reflected afterwards, how unthinkingly it was done; because it gave him to understand that both of them were known to me. But it did not strike Caspar in the same

way, and this no induced him to sit near to me, and to relate, with the most heartfelt sorrow, the history of his master. I reminded him to fulfil the last request of his benefactor, and heard, to my astonishment, that he did not think me dead. I immediately invented a story which convinced him of the fact. He departed early the next day, and promised me that he would faithfully observe my request. He took an affectionate leave of me, without knowing who I was, which convinced me that I might live at Venice in security; for I hoped to render the Prince services of great consequence.

Before I arrived at Venice, I met with an accident, which had great influence on my conduct. I stopped towards night-fall at an inn, which stood by the road-side. I found there a Polish Jew, who was at the point of death. He no sooner beheld me, than he addressed himself to me, and in a few minutes we entered into conversation, in which the greatest confidence was displayed. By my compassion, and the little service which I rendered him, I at last gained his utmost confidence. His illness increased; there was no hopes of his recovery. When we were alone, he called me to his bedside, and I experienced what astonished me beyond description. "I shall depart," he said, "very soon to Paradise, there to repose in the laps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but I have something of great importance, which I cannot carry with me. You have gained my confidence, and for that reason I shall deliver it to you."—I was obliged to swear that I would punctually perform all he required; at the same time, he assured me, that I should be very generously recompensed for it. He went on:—"The ——an confederates have sent me with a letter,"—(I was obliged to take it from the lining of his cap,) "instead of me, do you deliver it."

How great was my astonishment, when I heard the Armenian described from head to foot! He did not know who he was; but he told me the place where he was to be found, at certain hours, so that I could not possibly mistake him; he gave me, besides, a sign, which was unknown to any one else, and the answer of the Armenian would clearly prove him the person. He mentioned, with the greatest

care, every particular several times, that I might not err. Although I did not want this precaution, I seemed to be very attentive to what he said, that he might not suspect that I had any knowledge of the Armenian. I experienced by the ——an business a great support to my plan; for I was anxious that they should think me the real messenger, and not suppose that this man had merely sent me. I considered I should, on that account, be trusted with greater confidence. It was for the first time in my life that I wished for the death of a fellow-creature; but I certainly did in this instance; for I counted upon what I knew already, and believed for certain, that I should save the Prince as soon as I could light upon the Armenian; and this would all have been frustrated if the Jew had lived!

He died the following day. I performed, according to his request, the last service, and departed the next day. The letter I secreted in my cap. My heart beat with joy, and I offered up my thanks to heaven for its favour. I thought I should never reach the place of my destination. I arrived, at last, in Venice; my heart palpitated. I took lodgings in a remote part of the city, at a small inn. Before I arrived there, however, I was very much alarmed. As I stepped into a boat, I beheld Biondello in the same. I was fearful of being discovered, because I could not trust to my disguise, as there were so many sly fellows in the city; although I avoided being detected by Caspar (who knew me so well). But if a man studies to avoid being known, the more he acts his part, the sooner he is likely to betray himself. I was influenced by this consideration, and therefore put a good countenance upon the matter. Biondello patted my shoulder, and gave me to understand, that my presence was very dear to him. I might have given him some suspicion, if he had not disembarassed me, by enquiring something of ——. I answered him, that he must observe I had made secrecy my rule of conduct. Instead of being angry with me for such a reply, he was very satisfied with it. This peculiar conduct was very mysterious, but by degrees it cleared itself up. To my great satisfaction I learned from him, that they were informed of my death, and believed it; for he asked me if they had

found my corpse? I replied in the negative, alleging that it was impossible, or account of the ice that floated down the river—that I confirmed the report, every one will readily believe.

As soon as I arrived in the room which I had hired at the inn, I bolted the door, and opened the letter. The task was very difficult to perform; but I tried a variety of ways, and, at last, succeeded. To my great disappointment it was written in characters, and perfectly unintelligible. I made, however, several attempts to understand them, but in vain. I therefore copied them very exactly, in hopes, at some future time, to find the key to them. I closed the letter again, so that no traces of my having opened it could be perceived, and appeared the following day, at the appointed time, in St. Mark's Place. It was in the beginning of January: it was crowded with characteristic masks* and spectators, who were enjoying the entertainment. I did not mix with them; I was upon the watch for the Armenian. I pressed often through the crowd, and sought him in every corner, but he was not to be found. I resolved to wait until night, and then return again to the appointed place upon the *Broglia*, close to the church. The first person whom I saw was the Prince. He was in a domino, but his mask, which I knew, as well as his appearance, betrayed him. He stood before a pillar, upon which were a great many characters, and near him a mask dressed like a magician. The latter had a long white beard that descended to his belt, to which was attached a black rope, apparently as a symbol of his profession. In his right hand he held a stick, with which he pointed to the pillar, and seemed to explain something to the Prince, who listened very attentively. My curiosity prompted me to approach nearer, but it was useless, for they spoke so low that, in the tumult,

* I give this note for the information of those of my readers, who are unacquainted with the manners and customs of Venice. The characteristic masks are in Venice customary, from the time of the three kings, or wise men of the East, till the great feast day, which is the most lively in the whole year. All the streets and squares are, at that time, full of masks, and principally the St. Mark's Place. They represent all sorts of characters, nations, manners, and customs. Those who speak, entertain themselves with every one who will talk with them; they personate faithfully their adopted character, and being sometimes men of wit, afford great entertainment. You frequently see amongst them the *improvisatori*, who are a kind of poets famous for improvisus.

no person could hear a single word. The magician, at last, turned round and discovered me. I thought that he played his character for mere pleasure, and was entertaining the Prince with his tricks ; but I was greatly mistaken. The more I reflected upon this event, the more I was convinced that it was designed for some particular purpose. The magician went leisurely away. I had made it always a rule to notice the smallest circumstance that concerned the Prince, and therefore followed him immediately : but he disappeared, and I saw the Armenian coming towards me. I gave him the sign and he answered it, bidding me, at the same time, follow him. I complied, and he conducted me into a dark street. He there unlocked the door of a house, and we went together into a small room. He took the letter from me, and, overlooking it slightly, seemed to be satisfied with its contents. He put several questions to me on account of the — business, which I answered so that I did not give him the least cause to suspect me. He desired me to meet him again the next evening. He had parted from me, when he returned back, and addressed me in the Venetian language ; he had before spoken, to my great astonishment, in German. My genius assisted me ; I shook my head, and told him that I did not understand him. He smiled, and said he had forgotten himself. He was willing to remind me once more not to mistake the appointed hour the next evening. I promised him that I would not, and he went away. This circumstance made me still more cautious ; and I maintained my character so well, that, when I quitted it, it became very difficult for me not to use the tone and manners of a Polish Jew.

The time, until the hour arrived, passed very slowly ; at last, it was announced by a neighbouring clock, and I went immediately to the appointed place. I found the Armenian there, who hastily conducted me to a boat. Before we quitted it I was blindfolded, and when the bandage was taken from my eyes—guess my astonishment and terror !—for I found myself in the same hall where I had witnessed the frightful appearances I have before mentioned. It was exactly the same, but I thought the assembly were

more numerous. The hall was splendidly illuminated. The horror with which I recognised the fatal chamber was very visible ; for one of the assembly (by his speech, I guess it must have been the Armenian, for, as they all appeared masked, it was impossible to discover them,) told me to have courage. They said also, in the Venetian language, that a Jew was a singular animal, for he blushed at every thing but what related to traffic. The company took their seats at a long table, covered with black cloth. One of them seated himself at a little table, upon which there were pens, ink, and papers. He was probably the secretary of the society ; for he questioned me very minutely respecting the letter of —, and as to every circumstance that was at all connected with it, and wrote down all my answers to his questions. I could easily guess by this how much their success depended upon my answers ; for he read them over to me, advising me, at the same time, to alter what did not appear to me perfectly correct. I was too well prepared to drop any thing that might betray me ; I had likewise time enough, as I was questioned by an interpreter (I believe it was the Armenian himself), to think of the best answers. They were perfectly satisfied with me, and gave me a considerable present. The secretary paid it to me. I do not know how it happened, but his mask fell from his face. He endeavoured to put it on again as quickly as possible, but I already had seen that it was — Biondello ! The accident seemed to operate very forcibly upon the other members. " This circumstance," said they, " must now cost the poor Jew his life, to ensure our safety ; for in such cases as these we cannot depend upon honour."

" Accursed principle !" I thought, as the sweat poured down my forehead. I had sufficient resolution left to affect not to understand what was said ; for my attention was, to all appearance, directed to the money I had received. I heard their debates with apparent indifference, although they became so violent that they did not at all regard me. The question was, whether they should murder me or not. It was utterly impossible for them to understand each other, the tumult was so great. The Armenian, who had remained quiet for some time, now gave

a sign with his hand, and there ensued immediately a deadly silence.—This would have convinced me, had I not guessed it before, that he was the leader of this secret society. After a short pause, he began:—

“To provide for our safety, is our first and sacred duty. To maintain it, no sacrifice would be too great; but I cannot consent, on this occasion, to put a man to death whose services have been so essential to us.—I might say, and with justice, that it would militate against our plans, and destroy that which we have so carefully cherished.” He paused—but no one answered him. I became more composed. He proceeded. “And why should we kill him?—because he saw one” (pointing to Biondello) “unmasked!—Is he not in some measure a party concerned? and would it be possible for him, were this not the case, in the city of Venice, among so many thousand people, to find out one single person, whom he had but just glanced upon?—I moreover maintain, that the love of money, which is so natural to his nation, prevented his taking his eyes from the table. Our mere dress, without the mask, is sufficient to deceive any one who has not seen us in our ordinary habits.”

They all agreed with him. Biondello did not, perhaps, recollect that I had already seen and spoken to him in the boat; at least he would not mention it; or he might, perhaps, think I did not know him again. But to be certain of the fact, the Armenian asked me if I should be able to recognise the gentleman again whom I saw a few minutes ago unmasked? He put the question to me in such an insinuating manner, that many would have answered—“yes,” to give an idea of their powers for discrimination; but I knew too well how the business stood. I therefore made my answers accordingly. I affected not to know any thing of the matter; and, as I examined the money, I innocently asked, what they particularly wished me to do? “See,” said the Armenian, “I am not mistaken; he has not seen him!—He seemed to me too stupid to be a hypocrite, or to think of any thing but what leads to his interest.”

Several of the others made the same observation, and

seemed to regret that they had not chosen a cleverer fellow to transact their business. "Those who have sent him," answered the Armenian, "were prudent enough to see, that a task which did not require brilliant talents to execute, would have been faithfully and conscientiously performed by him; and indeed there is not so much treachery to be looked for in men that only know what they see, as in many others."—"Stupid people are always the most honest," added a fat gentleman (who probably could not boast of his abilities), and laughed at this impromptu so much, that the table, on which his belly rested, was very near falling down. I was dismissed, after they had enquired my place of abode, and commanded me to remain there for further instructions. They conducted me again blindfolded to the canal. My joy, when I found myself alone and safe, I need not describe; but the dreadful words, that they thought my death the only means of security, still resounded in my ears.

A whole month elapsed, in which I did not advance a step nearer to the completion of my purpose, notwithstanding my activity. My dress, and the promise which I had made to the Armenian (and by which I hoped to make some important discoveries), became now the greatest trouble to me; for it prevented me from instituting those enquiries which were necessary to aid my plans. It was impossible for me, as I was so surrounded by spies, to learn any thing that at all concerned the Prince without the greatest hazard. From what I had heard and seen in the secret society, I could only conjecture what they intended to do with the Prince; but it was impossible for me, an individual, to destroy the fabric which was built and guarded by so many.—I was continually reflecting upon these circumstances, which perplexed me very much. My sleep also was interrupted by the most frightful dreams, and was more fatiguing than refreshing. My imagination often pictured to me the Prince falling from a precipice. I caught him by his cloak, but it seemed to rend into a thousand pieces, and I saw him dashed upon the ground. I saw him struggling in a rapid stream; I ran to his assistance, and was drowned with him. I carried him from a

conflagration, and believed we were safe, when the flames suddenly surrounded us, and we were consumed. In short, the most horrible images, which my disturbed mind created, totally deprived me of my rest, and, I must confess, my weakness made an impression upon me the next day that was not easily to be eradicated; although I had very little faith in dreams.*

I was sitting one day (it was in the beginning of February, 17—) in my room, wrapt in reflection. The weather was very gloomy: flakes of snow, intermixed with rain, beat against my window, as the wind howled round the house. I did not quit my room the whole day. A gentle rap at the door at last roused me from my lethargy, and, before I could speak, I saw a man standing before me with a show-box upon his back. He asked me if I did not choose to see his raree-show? and without waiting for my answer, he set his apparatus before me. To get rid of him quickly, I gave him a piece of money, accompanied with a polite assurance that I had no desire to see his raree-show. I thought he would depart immediately, but I was very much mistaken. He first looked at me and then at the money. At last he said, "I never had so much given me before," and returned me the money. "You must have made a mistake!" I started. I found I had given him, in my hurry, a small gold piece—certainly too great a present for my situation. He observed my embarrassment. "Take the money back again," said he; "I will not profit by your error."

I did so; though I would readily have given it to him, through the fear of his being a spy. At that time the smallest circumstances were to me of consequence, and which I should not formerly have troubled myself about.—I gave him a smaller piece. He thanked me, but entreated me very much to look into his box. To get rid of him, I was obliged to comply with his request. He opened it, and I immediately started back—I beheld several scenes of the Prince's life (which could be known only to a very few

* I hope that no one of my readers will laugh at the Count O——'s weakness, which he himself so sincerely confesses. If I had observed this beforehand, I should have left out this little appendix, though I made it my duty to deliver every thing to the public as I have found it.—Edros.

persons), so accurately represented, that he who had a knowledge of them could not but recollect them. I looked significantly at the man; he disregarded me, and begged of me to see the other. — My astonishment now rose to the highest degree. I saw the figure of a Polish Jew, which exactly resembled me, with the following words under it: "The Count O—— as a Polish Jew." — I lost all my patience. In an angry manner I pushed the box from me; — "Are the agents of hell to be found every where?" I exclaimed, and stamped upon the ground. "Not every where," said the showman, as he grasped me by the hand. "Who are you?" I cried, starting with confusion. "Will you desert your friend?" I stood for a moment speechless. He drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped his face. "Do you not know your friend Seymour?"

It was him. My joy bordered upon frenzy. At a time when I believed myself abandoned by all, when I could not even whisper my sentiments, for fear of being overheard and discovered, I found a friend, who had ever deserved my veneration and love. No one that has not been in the same situation can possibly have an idea of my sensations. Every misfortune operated upon me with double force, because I had no friend to whom I could communicate my sufferings. Now I was in possession of that valuable treasure, and pressed him with affection to my heart. After the first burst of transport was over, I begged of him to relate to me the cause which brought him hither, and what could have induced him to leave his native country? — That he never would really have followed the trade of a showman, was very clear to me. — "I wished," he began, "as you will remember, to return to England. I travelled through Paris; and an accident obliged me to make a longer stay there than I at first intended. Several unforeseen events reduced my finances, and I was obliged, until new remittances arrived, to desist from pursuing my journey. In the mean time, I resorted to all the public places of diversion. I went one evening into a numerous society. The bottle circulated briskly, and the conversation became very agreeable. — At last a juggler came into the room, and begged to entertain us with his tricks. 'If they

are worthy to be seen,' said a noble spark, 'the society will perhaps indulge you.'—'To prove that they are, I will show you a specimen,' continued he; 'and let your own judgment determine whether I shall proceed or not.'—He performed some that were not common, and which excited our admiration.

"The society unanimously desired him to go on; and every new trick he produced procured him fresh applause. That he was an Englishman I immediately perceived by his accent, which made me attentive to him. It seemed to me, that his features were not unknown to me; but I could not immediately recollect who he was. Under the pretext that I wished to learn some of his tricks, and to countenance a countryman, I asked him to call on me next morning, and to take his breakfast with me. He came, and in a little time I discovered that I had been intimately acquainted with him from a boy. His name was Johnson. My joy on this occasion was equal to yours when you discovered me. I had been educated with him. His father had been tutor at my father's. His talents, and cheerful heart, had acquired him the patronage of my father, and he suffered him to be my playfellow, and constant companion. All the privileges that I enjoyed were also bestowed upon him; he was instructed by the same masters, and dressed as I was. I could not show in my whole wardrobe a single thing which he did not also possess, and frequently, I observed, that he excelled me. Being the only child, the tender love of my mother (who was dead) had somewhat spoiled me; and I very often told the servants, haughtily, that I was the only heir to a large fortune. My prudent father employed this method, to show me distinctly that from merit alone our character must be estimated; and he gained his point by that means sooner than he would have done by moralising. I was at first angry with him, and hated Johnson; but this did not last long, for, on account of his polite and good conduct, he acquired the esteem of the whole family; and, by his sincere love for me, I soon was conscious of his good qualities. We became the best of friends, and endeavoured to excel each other in affection. He discovered a talent for mechanics. As I did not suffer

him to eclipse me in any thing, I also applied myself to the art ; but, by his superior industry and perseverance, he soon excelled me in that science: I also was not so much interested with it as himself. My father let us want for nothing. He hired masters who gave us the best instructions. Expensive instruments were also procured ; and Johnson soon finished a variety of curious things. From thence he went on farther. A genius like his was not satisfied with continuing in a beaten tract ; he had a desire always to see and study something new. Mathematics, which we had often read with our tutor, who was a very clever and expert man, had discovered to him several departments of knowledge, which he now wished to acquire. He made sun-dials, he manufactured optical glasses, besides electrical machines, and never failed to execute any thing that appeared worthy of his attention. To be brief, (for I see clearly that the recollection of my past days, and the qualities of my friend, have made me rather too loquacious,) he became soon so expert and ingenious, that he often, although a boy of fourteen years, was the object of admiration ; and, on that account, he was called the little Jack of all trades. He went on thus till he attained his twenty-second year, when, with great industry, he applied himself to chemistry ; in which he soon made many new and useful discoveries. About that time my father died, and he lost a friend who had never let him want for any thing, but gratified his wishes at any expense. He now determined to travel. All my persuasions to detain him were fruitless. He stood firm to his intention, and I could not even obtain a permission to travel with him. He even refused the considerable legacy which my father had left him. At that I became angry, for I willingly would have shared with him my whole fortune, which he knew perfectly well ; but I could not prevent him from executing his purpose. He would not even accept any money from me. ' Well then, you may go,' said I, and embraced him with unfeigned sorrow.

" It is impossible for me to discover what it was that induced him to desert the man who had acted towards him like a brother, and for whom he had the greatest regard.—

I was not able to guess it. A letter which, shortly after his departure, I received from him has discovered it to me. After a long apology for his conduct, he says, 'that it was impossible for him to live any longer upon the bounty of his friends.' He considered my father's generosity as an act of charity—but it was a wrong idea. He, however, would endeavour to support himself. The death of my father caused him to reflect upon circumstances that never struck him before. He would not have a second benefactor, that he might not miss him; and wished not to expose himself to the danger of losing his support, when it had become impossible for him to exist without it. And if even he had not that to fear, he should be deficient in his duty, if he expected that from another which he was able to procure for himself.'—He added many other things; but this is sufficient to give you an idea of a man who will soon acquire your esteem; of one who rather chose to wander in the world, than to enjoy that rest and affluence which he could not procure by his genius. I will not detain you longer with his history, though it is very remarkable. You will be more pleased if you hear it from himself; and I am confident he will excite your admiration and respect.*

"The days which we spent together at Paris were exceedingly agreeable. We related our histories to each other, which indeed afforded a great fund of entertainment; for, since I received that letter, I had not either seen or heard from him. He said, that he had written several times to me; but, as I never obtained the letters, I could not answer them. I related to him the events which happened to me at Venice with the Prince—. After I had finished, he suddenly jumped from his seat, and ran up and down the room, as if influenced by some extraordinary idea. 'We shall save him!' he exclaimed. 'What, the Prince?' 'Yes, the Prince!' he replied firmly. 'How will that be possible?' 'My dear friend! don't reflect upon that at present; it wants but one desperate attempt. I see the possibility of the measure. Judging from what I have heard,

* He has, indeed, afterwards related to Count O— his history, which also came to my hands with these papers. It is very remarkable; and, should I again have any leisure time, and my readers have a desire for it, I will publish it. SCHILLER.

there is something serious at the bottom of these tricks. Let us destroy the plans of malice, which will perhaps be the ruin of many thousands, before they come to maturity.' ' Suppose they have in view something more than cheating him of his money, do you not believe that many are at work, and that resistance would be madness ? ' ' Undoubtedly, open resistance—but let us work against them where they do not suspect us, and in a way of which they cannot perceive the machinery, but only experience the effect of its operation. This, my friend, we certainly are able to undertake. I am too well acquainted with the deceitful tricks in this world which are published as wonders ; and if I can do nothing more than merely chase away the mist from the eyes of the Prince, I may, perhaps, save him from being enveloped in their diabolical snares.'

" This proposition was so noble, that, although it may prove fruitless, I consented to it. When my remittances arrived, we made the best of our way to Italy. A trifling indisposition, which affected my friend, retarded our journey for a little time. Johnson requested I would dismiss my servants, and retain only one single footman, who was sufficiently faithful and prudent not to discover any of our plans. Johnson disguised himself and us so that we were quite unknown ; a precaution which was very necessary.—He also observed, that in our mean dress we should be able to make more observations than otherwise ; for he maintained, that they were less suspicious of the poor than the great. We took lodgings separately, at different inns, to have a more ample field for the execution of our plans ; we even went so far as to have several lodging-houses, in which we alternately resided, having first changed our dresses, and concealed our country ; for we all spoke different languages with equal promptitude. By that means, dear O——, I succeeded in discovering you, notwithstanding your disguise." " But how was that possible ? " said I, interrupting him. " You betrayed yourself," he replied : " I lodged in the same inn that you did, and, by accident, was put into the room over yours. If I awoke in the night, I constantly heard some one speaking in your chamber. This made me attentive. I laid myself upon the floor of the room, and

overheard, through a crack, all that you said. I soon perceived that you were talking in your sleep. You must have been disturbed very much by frightful dreams, for your exclamations were generally—*Murder! Despair! Perish! Down! Down!*—Several times I heard you mention the name of the Prince; and this induced me to presume that you were the man whom I had such a great desire to see. I overheard you for several nights, and was at last confirmed in my opinion; for you spoke of things which no other person but yourself could possibly know. ‘Has he not similar views with us,’ said I; ‘knowing, as I do, that he was such a trusty friend of the Prince, and loved him so much? Is he not endeavouring to be useful to the Prince in that disguise; because he has rendered it impossible, by undeserved treatment, to appear in his true form.’”

“What!” exclaimed I, full of admiration—“You have been told, then, how the Prince has treated me?”—“More than that,” he answered. “You shall soon be convinced from Johnson’s letters, which I will communicate to you hereafter. However, I did not think proper to discover myself to you, as Lord Seymour, until I was fully convinced of the fact. I was suspicious, although it was improbable, that you were a spy in that disguise for the purpose of betraying me: I was, therefore, obliged to act with the greatest precaution. For that reason I appeared in the character of a showman. I had drawn, some time back, for my amusement, those scenes which I displayed to you, and it immediately struck me that they would be useful to me in this instance. Lest I should be deceived, which must have appeared in your conduct, I kept back your portrait until the last, which instantly gave me to understand that I was not wrong in my conjectures.

“It was some time,” continued Lord Seymour, “before Johnson and I were able to accomplish any of our plans, in spite of the greatest exertions. Every evening we met together, and communicated to each other our discoveries, and planned what measures we were to take in future. But, although we thought ourselves adepts at invention, we never could, by any stratagem, approach the Prince. ‘A good idea must be executed, though it may be founded on

a bad principle,' said Johnson, 'or all our undertakings will avail nothing, and our assistance probably arrive too late.' For that reason he wrote a note to the Prince, in which he invited him to appear alone, at the dead of the night, in a certain solitary place. He conveyed it, unperceived, into the Prince's pocket. He had written it so artfully, that the Prince, no doubt, presumed it came from the Armenian. The desire he had to be farther acquainted with this mysterious being, from whom he had heard nothing for some time, made us certain that he would not refuse this invitation. We were not deceived; he came. We hired two fellows to attack him, and came past as it were by accident. Johnson was to run to his assistance. For appearance-sake, he struggled with them, until they ran away at a noise made by myself and Matthias. Johnson conducted the Prince home, and we went, as quick as possible, to our lodging.*

"The success of this event you will find in Johnson's letters to me. They were sent, to avoid all intercourse with him, by a faithful waterman, to whom Johnson delivered them for me; and by that means he also obtained my answers."

And those letters I will communicate to the reader from Lord Seymour, from a French translation, which he made at my request, as I did not understand the English language. I have only omitted that which the public is already acquainted with from the preceding pages. Here the thread will be again united, which the death of my friend separated.

Johnson to Lord Seymour.

September 17, * *

I am not able to recover myself from what I may justly call my extravagant happiness. Friend, rejoice with me—all has succeeded to my utmost wishes, and I look forward with pleasure to the time when the Prince will be freed from his enemies. My whole plan is fixed upon; and although every thing appears in confusion, I hope, how-

* I have omitted inserting this event before, which my friend the Baron F—, in his relation, has slightly mentioned, because I thought this the best place for it.

ever, that time will produce the desired effect. I pity the Prince from my heart. I soon discovered how he was situated. He has a good understanding, and an excellent heart; and shame to them who have so industriously laboured to spoil both. But why do I communicate to you things which you know already better than myself? You may judge of the degree in which my happiness made me quite absent. I shall be obliged to act with more caution in future. My plans were on the point of being destroyed; for Biondello came suddenly into my room as I was writing. It was fortunate that I heard him approaching: I had just time enough to secrete all my papers, and walk with indifference towards the window. He did not seem to take any notice of me, but took his hat and cloak and went out, probably upon some of the Prince's errands. But I will now tell you every thing that appears to me of consequence, that I may not again be interrupted; it would be impossible for me to connect my whole train of thoughts.

I conducted the Prince home, as you already know, under the pretext of protecting him. He permitted me to do it without hesitation; for he did not seem to have recovered from his fright, into which the circumstance of meeting two ruffians, instead of the Armenian, had thrown him. He did not speak until we entered his room. He then introduced me to one of his barons and Biondello, who were in the same room, as the saviour of his life. He thanked me heartily, and told me to ask of him any favour. — I considered for some time, and at last told him, that he would show me the highest mark of friendship if he would keep me in his service; for I had some time ago lost my master, and had endeavoured in vain to get a new one. I gave myself out for an Englishman of a good family; I told him that my eldest brother, during my minority, spent my fortune, and forced me to the necessity of seeking for subsistence in the humiliating capacity of a servant. By the last part of my story, I hoped to excite his pity towards me; for I am confident that we feel always more compassion for those who are reduced from affluence to poverty, than for such as from their birth are accustomed to servitude. If he sympathised with me, I could very soon

claim his confidence. In that point I succeeded to my satisfaction in a short time. But what I am rejoiced at most is, that he has made me his chamberlain ; in which situation I shall often have an opportunity of being alone with him. He would not, he said, degrade the saviour of his life by a livery ; and regretted only that it was not at present entirely in his power to make me independent of the world.

As chamberlain, I am to have a small room to myself ; but this is not yet quite ready. Biondello has permitted me, for that time, to make use of his. He is very friendly towards me ; and, although I acknowledge his civility for appearance-sake, yet I do not trust him ; for he has so much flattery and cunning about him, that I fear he has very little honesty left.

Several days after.—Thank God, I am in possession of my little room, and begin to write to you again, which was till now impossible for me to do, Biondello watched me so narrowly. I must not attribute that to the Prince, because he is never mistrustful. Yet I will not judge harshly. I have not yet conversed with the Prince ; but as my clothes are not come from the tailor's, I will ascribe it to that circumstance ; but if when I am equipped he shuns me, I must conclude that there is something more at the bottom of it.

One day later.—This morning, early, I obtained at last my dress ; and you are not able to imagine with what apparent rapture I put it on. Biondello was present, and gave me joy, on my exchanging my old clothes for such rich ones. But whilst I rejoiced to think how I had succeeded, he believed it arose from a childish love of finery, and this, I have no doubt, made him assure me that they fitted me extremely well. I let him enjoy his error, and to confirm his opinion, I took every part into my hands, and contemplated it with a foolish pride, smiled at myself in the glass, and neglected nothing that could convey to him the idea of my being a stupid clown. To make the joke complete, I told him that I intended now to take a walk, to show myself to the people, which I had not courage to do in my old coat. I intend, by that manœuvre, to send

you my first letter ; and I am sorry if you have been at all embarrassed on my account.

The same to the same.

October 1.

Biondello is the most cunning fox in the world ; but I have, in spite of his ingenuity, deceived him. By the confidence which he seems to put in me, he watches me so closely, that if I had not taken great care I should certainly have betrayed myself ; but I have at last made him believe that I am a perfect, unsuspecting blockhead ; and indeed it is the opinion that I wish him to have of me, in my present situation. He studied to find out in me more than I chose to let him know ; and the trouble he gave himself to accomplish this, is a sure proof that in him there is something more than the mere secretary of the Prince. The Prince has a very high opinion of him. He does not consider him as his servant, but his trusty friend. I pretended not to understand a word of the Venetian language (and Biondello thinks he is quite sure of it, for he has tried many experiments to prove the fact), and all those who do not speak English I converse with in French ; they are not at all suspicious of me, but often talk about things when I am present, which, if they knew I understood them, they would certainly conceal from me. As they look upon me to be of no consequence in opposition to their schemes, and the Prince likes me to be about his person, I now constantly attend him ; and he enjoys the advantage, as he supposes, of not being obliged to send me out of the room if he is conversing with any one, which he is always obliged to do with his other servants, as they understand the language.

Last night, as I was undressing him in his room, Biondello was present. After conversing upon some indifferent topics, they began about me. Biondello thought my qualities were stupidity, sincerity, and honesty. The Prince said that he was pleased with my person, and thought the qualities Biondello spoke of were better than good intellects united with a bad heart. " He is also courageous," said he ; " and to that I owe my life, at least my freedom," —

Biondello understood this hint. He altered his tone immediately ; for, at first, he was very satirical. He might have forgotten himself. He now talked a great deal about me, and said many handsome things of me to flatter the Prince. From that they turned to the subject of the attack made upon the Prince, and cracked their brains for a long time to discover the person who hired the bravos to murder him. That the note did not come from the Armenian, Biondello maintained ; for it was not likely that, if he meant to attempt the Prince's life, he would execute his plans with such temerity. The Prince agreed with him ; and the only doubt then remaining was, who could possibly have views upon his person, if it was not him, who had already given him to understand so. Biondello pointed out to him the possibility that his own court had done it, to lay hold of him. It immediately struck the Prince so forcibly, that he broke out into a most violent passion. It is true all circumstances united serve to strengthen this supposition ; for I learned, by the conversation, that the Prince had lately received a very rigorous letter from thence ; and Biondello reminded him of the conversation which passed at St. George. This circumstance apparently confirmed the fact in the Prince's mind. His expressions I will not repeat here. I do not know if I am wrong, but it seemed to me as if Biondello was pleased with the idea, that the Prince despised his court : for he knew the kind of language that would increase the Prince's anger, without letting him suspect his cunning. This man possesses dexterity sufficient to guide any person where he pleases, without his being able to perceive the thread with which he leads him. He sometimes appears quite different to that which you would suspect. Towards me he did not always act with such precaution ; for that reason I discovered more of his character than I otherwise could have done. He had strict orders from that hour to have his wits about him, and also to intercept the letters of Baron F—— (a cavalier of the Prince's household) to Count O——, to see if they would lead to any thing satisfactory. " For," added the Prince, " this F—— seemed some time back dissatisfied with my continuing here."

What this will lead to I am not able to see at present. I wish I could but give a hint to Baron F——, to be upon his guard ; for if Biondello conspires against him, he must fall a sacrifice to his plans.

Several days after.—Biondello every day puts more and more confidence in me, and it is, in all probability, because I communicate to him, with the greatest accuracy, all that I hear and see ; but you'll understand, I tell him only those things which he ought to know.—I seem to keep no secret from him. He often listens with the greatest patience to the ridiculous nonsense with which I endeavour to entertain him ; and he generally compliments me upon my talents and good conduct in trusting to him with such sincerity. Indeed, the method I have taken is the best way to ensure his countenance. But he is mistaken in my character, notwithstanding the accurate knowledge he possesses of mankind. In every conversation I distinguish more and more what an opinion he has of me ; indeed he begins to give me little commissions, but which at present do not consist of any thing farther than to have a watchful eye, in his absence, upon the Prince's conduct, and to communicate to him all that I have perceived and heard. And, to enable me to do this effectually, he takes care that every little new trait in my character is reported in a favourable manner to the Prince, who becomes every day more and more attached to me, and prefers me to all his other servants ; indeed he has of late appeared very suspicious of them, which is, in all probability, a contrivance of Biondello, in whom he puts the most unlimited confidence. That I should succeed so well, and in so short a time, I did not imagine ; it exceeds my most sanguine expectations. I will set it down as one of my great masterpieces of art, if I am able to outwit this Biondello.

A certain Marquis, by name Civitella, has just left the Prince. I have often seen him here. I question whether he seeks any thing beyond the honour of the Prince's friendship. They seem very intimately acquainted, and indeed I cannot blame the Prince for that ; for this Marquis has many good qualities, and seems to study to dis-

play them to advantage in the presence of the Prince. However, I have heard the Prince many times promise to pay him money ; and, from what I could collect, it is not a small sum.—Then the Prince is in debt—it cannot be otherwise, from his present extravagance.—But how are his debts to be paid, when I know, for certain, that he receives nothing from his court ? Is not this a diabolical plan of the Armenian, to detain him, and succeed in his designs upon him ? I advise you, friend, to provide yourself with money, which may be had immediately upon your orders. I leave it entirely to your prudence, how you will accomplish this necessary object without betraying yourself.

I must tell you of a discovery which I have just made, and which I think of consequence :—The Prince generally goes out towards evening, and this happens very often ; and, to-day I hear, he belongs to a certain society, called the Bucentauro. Could you not learn something about this sect ; and whether we must also direct our attention to that ? He was scarcely gone, when I hastened to my room to write to you. I had just finished the last line as Biondello came in. I must tell you that he does not suspect any thing when he finds me engaged in writing. I have told him that I have a great delight in making verses, and on that account I have always a poem lying at my side, which, as soon as I hear any person coming, I put in the place of the letter ; and, to play my part well, I affect to translate it to him (for he does not understand English), and repeat the most stupid nonsense with a kind of poetic mania. This time he had not a desire to hear my poetry, but entreated me to defer reading it to a future opportunity, and go with him to his room ; so that he might be present when the Prince arrived. This I did, and I was obliged to report to him all that had happened to the Prince during his absence. When we were in the height of our conversation, there came into the room an old man. He was bent low beneath his years ; but there was an expression in his countenance which ill accorded with his age. His voice also was full and regular, and he had not that trembling pronuntiati^on which generally affects aged people. Biondello told me that he was his

relation. I was going to absent myself, but he entreated me to stay ; as his cousin, he said, did not understand any other language than the Venetian, and as, besides, he had nothing of consequence to communicate to him. The old man looked at me with suspicion, but I busied myself with a book, and took no notice of him. " Do you know for certain that he does not understand us ? " said he. " Are you sure that he is not an impostor ? "

Biondello told him he need not be under any apprehension.—He described my character to him, and said, that in spite of my stupidity he could make me of service to him. " I will believe you," he exclaimed, " for I am acquainted with your talent in the knowledge of mankind, and which makes you worthy of your dangerous employment. The greater part of the fabric, which I have curiously raised, rests upon your shoulders. Do not lose, for heaven's sake, at the moment of its accomplishment, that firmness which will prevent our being buried in the ruins. I know your caution and foresight are very great. Think also on the reward you will gain, when we behold your giant work completed. I expect letters from —, and we are then at the summit of our wishes ; for the Prince will not make any resistance."

" The journey then, which you undertook, has been of great service ? " " Is there any thing impossible ? Had I not found great difficulty in persuading the court of —d— to agree in our plans, the mountains, which now appear before us, should long ago have disappeared. I did not mistrust you, believe me. Though it were so, I should forgive you ; for how could you be able to penetrate into my schemes ?—You believed that many things were the effect of chance, which I contrived and put into execution.—Can you suppose that the Prince of —d— came to Venice for nothing ? " " No one can possibly imagine what steps your prudence takes." " You must know then that he came hither at my request, to entice our Prince to a licentious manner of living, and to bring him, by that means, nearer to the point on which my plans are centred." " Pardon me, when you could so easily

have communicated with the court upon the conduct of the Prince, why was that journey necessary?"

"Is it not easier to remove a prince from the place where it is likely his penetrating eyes would have pried into our designs, than to make thousands privy to our plans? I had only to write to the Prince to come, for we had settled it some time ago.—I knew he was a member of the order of ——. I am one of them. I wrote to the superiors of the order, and they contrived to send messages to him, which made him believe he was invited to see the internal part of the sanctuary." "I am astonished! As often as I see you, you always appear to me in a new and extraordinary character." "Hear then farther. The second step was not difficult for me to take. The Count P—— is first minister at the court of —d—. For appearance sake, the feeble King wears the crown, but P—— governs: he is the machine by which every thing is regulated. This P—— has long been my friend. I was acquainted with him whilst he was ambassador at Rome, and I proposed him for a member of the order of ——. At that time the sketch of the plan, which we are now about to execute, was shown to him, and which was always the same, although accident has changed the persons by whom it was to have been accomplished. I wrote to him that every thing was ready, and we waited for him only to complete it. Nothing was easier for him than to persuade his avaricious monarch to let out his troops to conquer —, to which his council had long before directed their attention. P—— met me at —i— to bring me the happy account of his success, and the King suspected that he was gone to conclude a promised alliance."

"Do I dream? Is it possible to play thus with kings?" replied Biondello. "I did not expect such a question from you," said the old man. "Do you not know, that one may deceive kings much easier than other people; because flattery succeeds to a miracle with them; spreading, as it were, a mist before their eyes? And if they are prudent enough to disregard that illusion, we must then give them amusements to which they are attached, and never deprive them of any thing, but what relates to state affairs, for fear

of incurring their displeasure."* "And does not the King of —d— know for what purpose he lends his powers?" "Is the architect obliged to explain his whole design to a mason, who is employed to place stones and execute the work, which probably he would not even then understand? He works for his daily bread, and if he obtains that, he is satisfied. Can the King of —d— desire more than the acquisition of —, which must be of great value to him, as it is immediately connected with his own territories? It is the object which he sets his heart upon. However, to satisfy your curiosity would take up that time in which I hope to hear more important accounts of the Prince."

Biondello replied: "Every thing is in the same state as when you left us; and I have only here and there added a little where it seemed necessary." Here Biondello related to him the event of that evening in which the Prince was attacked, and concluded with saying, that he had made use of that circumstance to enrage the Prince more against his court; for he made him believe, it was certain that the court intended to imprison him. The old man seemed satisfied with that, and immediately replied, "How is he as to his manner of thinking?" "He approaches more and more to a freethinker," replied Biondello; "and I am confident but little is wanting to render him such entirely." "Then," said the old man, "my machines act as successfully as I can wish." "How! was this also your work? Will a freethinker believe in apparitions? Will he bend his neck to the yoke of a religion which puts restraint on him, and which it is your opinion he will accept?"

"I see you are very little acquainted with the human heart. To shake a belief, which fundamentally rests upon conviction, is very difficult; but to guide the opinion of a sceptic is sufficiently easy. This may seem a paradox, but I will prove it to you:—Man—let him wear a crown, or

* I have written every thing down as I found it, and I do not know how far this may be true. But, if I may speak my opinion, it does not appear to me quite certain; for I have seen in my life but one king, and he seemed to me so full of wisdom and majesty, (probably the old King of P——, Fr. II.) that I would have sworn that his very looks would have awed those that dared to insult him.

the rags of a beggar—wants always a support in trying circumstances; and if he despairs at all, he sighs after comfort with double anxiety. And what offers to him the wished-for consolation but religion? Hence, it is evident, that the religions of those nations who are still, as it may be said, in a state of ignorance, have infinitely more ceremonies than those that are enlightened. The Prince rejected this support, and launched boldly into the gulf of sophistry. The more he meditates upon it, the more it will perplex him. As he sinks beneath enquiry, he will greedily devour any new idea that tends to dissipate the former. And is not the Catholic religion, in which there are so many saints that he cannot doubt his preservation, exactly calculated for the purpose?"

"How! Do I hear right? Did you not extol the principles of doubt, and yet you called scepticism a tottering fabric? Have you also been converted, and have you found a greater consolation in contemplating the scapulary, than in your former rational way of thinking?" "Why do you let appearances so often deceive you? Is not the tool that is used by the mechanic for the most curious purposes, when placed in the hand of a child, a dangerous instrument, with which it innocently wounds itself? Does not solid food affect the feeble stomach, whilst it operates not upon a strong one? And will not a child throw from it the instrument with which it has wounded itself, whilst the artist would not sell it for any price? Will not the person of a weak stomach avoid food that is disagreeable to it, whilst the hungry healthy man enjoys it? But I will argue otherwise. What is belief, and what is disbelief? Does not the Mahometan think that his belief is founded upon principle and authority, and call the Christian an unbeliever; whilst the latter thinks the same of him? Hence, then, we may conclude, that belief depends merely upon conviction, the want of which is disbelief. — This is self-evident."

"You think, then, a fundamental belief is that of which we feel convinced, and also that men may entertain different opinions upon the same subject, and yet be called believers." "They both undoubtedly think that they are so." "Is

not that an argument against you? If the Prince thinks that his belief is fundamental—" "Then it would be difficult to wean him from it; but he does not think so." "And yet he adheres to it with firmness, and defends his opinion with the greatest warmth." "Let me ask you one question:—Does conviction always carry with it tranquillity of mind?" "I thought that they were inseparable."

"And do you find it with the Prince? Have you not often told me, that, when free from dissipation, he was dissatisfied with himself? He is the child who is pleased with the brightness of a knife, which he throws away as soon as he is hurt by it; he is the invalid whose stomach cannot digest heavy food; who guards against it as soon as he perceives the evil; and then, in order to rid himself as soon as possible of his former disorder, adopts a lighter diet as necessary. The Prince thinks that many of those things are beneath his notice which men seize upon with so much eagerness, and from which continual reflection and an unbiassed mind alone can deliver us. And I declare to you, that in a short time he will believe in spirits and apparitions. I do not know him — I do not know the human heart, if his former bigoted ideas of religion do not return with double force. Must not this consequence obtrude itself upon him as soon as his experience teaches him that apparitions do exist; that his present philosophy could not once make him disbelieve this, which is the most trifling and unimportant point that a man can doubt of. Would it not much less be able to eradicate that idea from his mind which education, custom, and our own partiality, have concurred to proclaim by an internal voice? Will he not pass from professed freethinking to the contrary extreme, and thank the man who leads him to it?"

Biondello was silent, and appeared perfectly convinced. The old man rose slowly from his arm-chair; Biondello then told him something which I was not able to understand distinctly; but I learned that he was to prepare the machines; for, the day after to-morrow, there was to be a grand feast.

Well, friend, what do you think of this conversation? The least that we can infer from it is that Biondello

is concerned in the plot against the Prince. Who can possibly be that old man?—Is it not merely the gasconade which is always peculiar to those sort of people? because they by that method keep their underlings (of whom, in all probability, Biondello is one) in an astonishing dread of their power. So that I know not what to think of his making use of the —d— for the execution of his plan. And for what purpose was this employed? How can it have any reference to the Prince? How does this all agree with ———?—Ha! I have a thought—What if they intend to create the Prince King of ———?—Perhaps this may be the intention of the court of —d—.—I must confess sincerely, that, at present, all is a perfect mystery to me.

The same to the same.

October the 4th.

The Prince is invited to-morrow to a feast, which is given in St. Benedetto, and, as I understand, merely on his account. His whole household (except one) will be present! and who this one should be is a matter of great dispute. The lot will probably fall to Biondello, because he has pretended for some time to be indisposed. I call it a pretence, because, in my presence, he does not appear so, at least less than when the Prince is present. He will, perhaps, as soon as we are gone, employ his time in the preparation of the machines of which the old man spoke. His pretended indisposition prevents suspicion, and makes it more probable. And may it not be possible that this banquet is the idea of the old man? I shall have a watchful eye upon him, and, if possible, will remain at home.

October the 5th.

I know not what to make of the Prince to-day. He rose very early, looks pale and haggard, but studiously seeks to hide it; and is dissatisfied if we appear to observe it. It is the same with Baron F—— and Biondello. They are all silent, but the Prince laughs at them; yet I can observe that his mind is not easy.—Perhaps he has seen an appa-

rition. It is probable, although I cannot discover the truth.*

The whole house are gone to St. Benedetto, and I am the only inhabitant in this large building. A freezing horror surrounds me. My character, as I informed you, was mistaken by Biondello; and he begged of the Prince to accompany him. I am glad he is not here; for his carelessness has thrown into my hands his pocket-book filled with letters. He left it in his great-coat pocket. It contains, to all appearance, nothing of consequence; but I will not omit to secure any thing that, perhaps, at a future period, may be of great importance. I thought I should discover something more when I found it, but I was deceived; for there were only some little songs, poems, and love-letters. I was about to return it to its place, when I resolved to ransack it once more, and, behold, I discovered a secret pocket; in which there was what appeared to me to be the key to some private writing, that may one day or other fall into our hands; you will take particular care of it.

Several of the Prince's household are returned, and in great consternation. It is said the Prince has killed the Marquis Civitella, and is fled. The reason for this rash act I know not. God only knows how this unfortunate affair will end!

Count O—— in continuation.

As soon as I had read this, the letter which the Jew gave me for the Armenian came into my mind. I sought it, and found that the figure was indeed the key to the hieroglyphics. I hastened immediately to Lord Seymour, to inform him of this acquisition. We sat ourselves down, and, with that key, very easily unravelled the whole; part of which is as follows:—

“All that you desired is prepared to the greatest nicety, and ——inski is chief of the party; a man of great firmness and valour, who is beloved by all. He is satisfied with your promises, and wishes, as we all do, very

* The reader knows it already by the relation of Baron F——, and for that reason I omit the rest here. *Annot. of the Count O——*

much that the — Prince may become our King. As soon as he has embraced the Roman Catholic religion, and has obtained the — crown, we shall immediately look upon him as our regent; and one single word will then be sufficient to make him our sovereign, and us —”

Our surprise at the contents was beyond conception — the execution of the scheme depending merely upon one word too. And what will be the consequence if the Prince should be King of —? The old man said himself, that these were the only means to accomplish the plan — and what could that plan be? — No other than that which would shake monarchies to their foundation, or totally subvert them. And if the Prince should obtain the crown of —, what would happen — Is there not besides him a successor? Now I perfectly understand the signification of these words, “Wish yourself success, Prince; he is dead.” I now perfectly recollect with what emphasis the Prince repeated those words. (As F—— has written to me) I was seized with horror.

“Friend,” said I to Lord Seymour, “let us not proceed in this business — what are we against so many? how shall we be able to swim against the stream?” “We will do it as long as our powers last,” he answered me, resolutely. “Suppose they are detected, and we are involved in the danger?” “Then we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done all that we possibly could do, which will sweeten our hours, whether breathed out in a prison or a palace.” “But is it possible that he can have that consolation who throws himself through caprice into danger?” “We are not in that situation. — When the lives of thousands, or at least their happiness, is at stake, no danger is too great to brave, if there is any probability of succeeding.” “And is this the case?” “It is.”

“How, friend, can you effectually subvert power? Can you hinder a band of rebels from leading away the thoughts of the Prince, when they are attracted by force? Has he not already done what they at — desired him to do? Will not every action now become easy to him, when he considers that he can receive forgiveness of his

sins after every wicked deed?" "Friend, you do not consider that if our plans fail, there is still one left? Have you no idea of the power of the state inquisition here? If we discover only half of what we have heard to be true, every thing is lost. Will they not fear, and with justice, that in that secret society are also manufactured plans against the republic; and that they wish the Prince to assist them in the execution of their schemes? You must consider also, that we cannot be detected if we inform through the *Bocche Parlanti*."* "But what will become of the Prince? Gracious Heaven! — If we should be the means of forcing the sword of justice to be drawn against him."

"The Prince is excusable — whatever he has done, his rank will be taken into consideration. Punishment is not inflicted with that severity upon men of high birth, as it is upon the meaner class of mankind. But let the worst come; — is it not better that *one* man, even though a Prince, should die for the people, than that multitudes should perish on his account? — And though the mine in its explosion should even shatter us with the rest, from our ashes there will spring flowers which must make future generations revere our memory."

Every one of my objections made the Englishman more firm; and I was at last convinced that he was right, although I suffered much in the encounter. I suppressed my tears with the hope of a better issue to our plan than that which we supposed; and sought, as much as I could, to persuade myself of its being practicable, though I acknowledged the feeble foundation upon which it rested. I trusted principally to Johnson's prudence, which was evinced in a great degree by his letters. — With the greatest anxiety I hastened to my lodgings, and read the following letters written by him. Two of them I have omitted entirely, as they did not contain any thing but

* These *Bocche Parlanti* are large lions' jaws, of marble; there are many of them to be seen in the Palace of St Mark. All secret denunciations are put in them, and over every one is written the kind of accusation which you are to deliver. The State Inquisitors examine them every evening, and take into consideration the letters they find in them. By that means it is easy to remain unknown; for he who expects a recompense for his information detains a piece of it to show it.

what has already been related. And if I found in the others what I wished for, the reader will easily discover it.

Johnson to Lord Seymour.

October the 25th.

Since the events which have of late happened to the Prince, he is quite changed. He flies the societies which he formerly sought. — He locks himself up in his room, and appears gloomy and melancholy. I do not wonder at this ; but it has taken too strong a hold of him, for I am fearful that he should lay violent hands on himself. — Would you suppose that, under the pretence of being ill, he has sent away the Marquis, who shows so much tender care for him, and is devoted to the completion of his happiness, and who was a little while ago his most intimate friend ; and will you believe me when I tell you, that Biondello is not now so frequently about his person, and that his love for solitude is equal to his master's. Necessary as this might be under other circumstances, it now makes me more anxious for him. He has so entirely separated himself from the world, that he seems cold even to his bosom friends : a state of mind by which suicide must be encouraged, and less resolution be required to commit it. That this is already the case with him, I experienced last night. I was alone with him in his room. This happens now very often ; for, as soon as it grows dark, he does not like to be alone ; he therefore obliges me to be with him, as he believes he can vent his sorrows in my presence, without my being able to understand him, and that I cannot, from stupidity, learn any thing from his gestures. This dread of being alone in the evening, which he was before not accustomed to, gives me (besides the advantage of observing him) hopes that he may, perhaps, even yet, adopt other sentiments ; for, in my opinion, solitude by candle-light must rather strengthen than alter such a resolution. And I think, that as long as one yet fears something, or, which is the same thing, thinks one has something to lose, let it be ever so trifling, which one would not willingly be deprived of, the ties are not entirely severed which unite us to this mortal life.

Now to the business. I was alone with him one evening, when he rested his head upon his hand, and sat for some time almost without animation. He sighed deeply, and lamented that he had ever been born. At last he rose, and opening his writing desk, took out of it a red riband. He pressed it to his heart and lips. Oh! that I were able to describe his look. It pierced me to the heart—I will give you, to the best of my recollection, his soliloquy.

“Oh! thou only remains of my beloved Theresa!” (the name of the Greek lady.) He pressed the riband to his lips, as the tears burst from his eyes. The stress which he laid upon these words, and his deep sorrow, almost deprived me of my senses. I never saw a man in such a terrible situation. His eyes were wildly expressive, and his voice hollow and monotonous. I believed his feelings had almost driven him to insanity. The burden seemed too heavy for his soul to bear. He remained for some time fixed like a statue:—at last he spoke. “My Theresa! my all! my ——. Ah! how can this miserable earth afford any relief to my sufferings!—this pitiable state which cannot produce one single being who is perfectly happy. Which could murder a Theresa!—an angel!—murder!—murder!—murder!” (This he spoke with dreadful agitation.) “Ha! what prevents me from breaking the bands which separate me from her? Who can blame the lion that bursts the chains which deprive him of his liberty, and which separates him from his young? But can I find her again? Irrecoverably lost! Irrecoverably! I would seek her through the world, but she is irrecoverably lost! What would I now give for the sweet ideas of eternity, which console so many under their afflictions! What would I not sacrifice, if I knew for a certainty that man had still a farther destination after his death? I would endure the painful torments of hell, could I hope by that to recover my Theresa. Why was a form so beautiful created to be the food of worms, that prey indiscriminately upon the works of nature? Oh! thou that dwellest beyond the stars, if thou existest, restore her to me again, and I will believe in thee!!—Ha! what is that? What thoughts prey upon my mind?—Shall I then never more

forget her? Will she be always united to every idea?—Wilt thou—eternal Being!—give me a hint of thy existence? Oh! what a sea of doubts and uncertainty! Who can save me from it? I shake like a reed, which the wind will break. But I will not wait for it—I will prevent it. I will attain the truth—I will draw back the curtain which hides her from my sight!”

He walked up and down in the room in violent agitation. He did not seem to regard me at all. His eyes glanced upon the riband, which he held fast in his hand. He started with surprise. It was green! “What is this?” he exclaimed. “Will you tear from me this also, ye invisible powers? I am, perhaps, still to be happy?—Ah!—Ah!—Happy!—(after a pause.) But I have it still. It is, perhaps, the dear shade of my Theresa that is near me, and will administer comfort to my heart. Hope! Oh! without thee there is no comfort left!”

You see, dear Seymour, that he believed the change of the colour was a miracle. If I had dared, it would not have been a difficult task for me to unravel the mystery; for, when I consider that Biondello has a false key to the bureau, the change is easily explained; and should we not suspect such a man of every thing? It was very late, and the Prince did not seem disposed to retire to rest. His mind still dwelt upon his beloved. His soliloquy was a strange mixture of belief and doubt, and both were apparent equally. “Yes, it will, it must be so; with the thread of life will also be destroyed my piercing torments!” He had scarcely finished the last word, when Biondello rushed into the room, and threw himself at the Prince’s feet. Alarm and terror were expressive in his countenance, his eyes seemed starting from his head, his hair was dishevelled, and he was half dressed. “Alas! my gracious Prince,” he at last cried, with a tremulous voice, and pressed himself closer to him. The Prince was quite embarrassed, and said not a word. “Pardon, pardon, gracious Prince!” exclaimed Biondello again.

“Are you mad, Biondello?” said the Prince. “Why do you ask my pardon? What have you committed?” “It would be well if I *were* mad. Alas! my gracious, my

beloved master!" The Prince had great difficulty to bring him to his senses. At last he succeeded, and then related his reason for this strange conduct; after having entreated once more his pardon for what he should relate. The Prince granted it, and he at last began.

"Since your Highness has devoted your hours to solitude, I have led a most miserable life. It is the more painful to me, when I consider that I have lost your affection. It seemed I was no longer worthy of it, nor of the happiness to be with you, gracious Prince! I did not perceive in you any traits of your former humiliation; but, in its place, I beheld your countenance shadowed by melancholy. I questioned myself from what this could proceed. I doubted whether from the effect of the apparitions, or the great losses you had sustained. But you did not reflect upon them at the moment;—it was from mature deliberation, and when there was nothing to be feared. Sudden and violent sorrow is seldom of long duration; but that which comes after it is so much the more dangerous, as it takes deeper root, and deprives us of that consolation which we in general treasure up for ourselves. Anxiety for you, gracious Prince, oppressed my soul, disturbed me during the day, and chased away slumber from my eyes.—I had scarcely laid myself down, and offered up a prayer to my Saviour, and all the saints, that they might take you under their protection, when on a sudden I thought I saw a light. I opened my eyes, but I was obliged to shut them immediately. A figure stood before me in the midst of splendour, which blinded me. I could not on that account open them again. With an agreeable, yet thrilling voice, it spoke as follows:—‘Thy master is big with thought, which is supported by his disbelief. He means to fly by suicide into futurity, for which he is not yet prepared. I dared not to appear to him myself. Tell him this, and warn him of the consequences of so rash an act.’"

The Prince turned pale, seized Biondello by the collar—"Impostor," he exclaimed, with a fearful voice, "you have overheard me!"—Senseless he fell upon the ground. I hastened to his assistance; but the Prince prevented me, and dragged him to an arm-chair. His look was ghastly.

It was a long time before he could recover himself, in spite of our endeavours. But as soon as he opened his eyes, he threw himself again at the feet of the Prince, and begged pardon that he was obliged to say what he did. The Prince repented his intemperance. "It is the effect of imagination, Biondello," said he to him; "go to bed. To-morrow I will send a physician to you. I forgive your conduct, because it shows your love for me. Be composed on my account, and go to bed."

"I have not dreamed, gracious sir, and my fancy has not at all deceived me. Behold here is the proof of it."—He put something into the hand of the Prince, who looked at it with astonishment. "Yes, it is," he exclaimed; "it is the ring of my Theresa, which I gave her on her birthday.—Oh what a day of happiness was that to me! But how came it into thy hands? How is that possible? She took it with her into her grave; I saw it myself!" "The spirit gave it to me.—'Here,' said he, after having uttered those dreadful words, 'carry this to your master, and tell him that patience and resignation will be his best guide.' He disappeared, and I hastened hither."—"Hope and patience conduct us to the end which we desire! What is this! If she—It cannot be her—"

At this moment there was a great knocking at our gate; it was opened, and the Marquis Civitella came in. His dress, as also his countenance, indicated the greatest embarrassment: from his eyes flashed anxiety and fear. He hastened immediately into the Prince's room; and when he saw him he seemed to be more tranquil.—Can you guess, friend, for what purpose he came hither at such an unusual time?—He had seen the same apparition as Biondello had; every word was the same, only that he did not obtain the ring, which the Prince had forced, with great difficulty, upon his finger. It is therefore but too true, that he also belongs to the party, and that all this is an invention. I cannot doubt it for a moment. If I were not already a little prepared for their plans, they would have deceived me, so masterly did they act their parts. And I must give myself credit that I looked upon all this for deceit, and not for fact. so great was their deception.

Judge yourself, by that, if it was possible for the Prince to doubt a moment on the subject ; and the ring—from whence they obtained that I should like to know. As far as I can learn, the Greek lady is buried in the vault of a church of the convent ——, where no person can obtain an easy access. We must presume then, that there are some monks of the order engaged in the execution of the plan ; and even if they knew not any thing of this circumstance, they may have been corrupted by money ; which, from the character of the priests, I naturally conclude must have been a considerable sum. Do not laugh at my observation, if it should seem singular to you. I thought it necessary to refute what you said in your last letter ;—that the desire of acquiring wealth might probably be the aim of the conspirators. That is certainly not the case ; for what sums of money might they not already have spent, which the Prince, in his present situation, never could repay them ? And if that was their aim, could they not have obtained it quicker and surer ? How you came at present to have such an idea, I cannot comprehend. Do not deceive yourself with the delusive dream of hope : and, for heaven's sake, do not believe that your bank-notes will be sufficient to subvert the plans which are laid for the Prince. Let us make use of them for our own support, whilst we are endeavouring to destroy their views. And that cannot happen until I experience more of the business ; for we are not able, at present, to prevent the attacks upon the Prince's religious opinions, unless his good genius should assist us ; but we cannot expect that at present. I am not perfectly clear as to the extent of their design. I believed that they wished to make the Prince a mere proselyte ; for we already have a number of instances of the kind, and of the tricks made use of by the church, to tear what they call a stray sheep from the claws of the devil. But this seems to me very improbable, for they would have found this an easier task than that which they are pursuing. And what could induce the old man to have said, that he had already sought to bring the court of —d— over to his plans, if he did not mean to prove himself a pitiful boaster, which could not have been his

intention. But, because I cannot find out their aim, it does not prove that it must necessarily be the desire of acquiring authority. If I was willing to entertain you with more probabilities, I could fill my letter with them. But what am I about? I see that my letter has increased very much, and yet I have not related to you all that my heart wishes, and what it is necessary for you to know. You see how clearly I was determined to support my opinion. Have you entirely forgotten that I like to quarrel with you, and that you used to call me, in a joke, the quarrelsome friend? This harangue is sufficient to recall that to your memory.

Civitella stayed with us the remainder of the night. They had no idea of retiring to rest; I was therefore obliged to call up the cook, to prepare a meal as quickly as possible.* They sat themselves down to the table, but had no appetite. In vain did Civitella endeavour to be witty; in which he, in general, succeeds very well. The conversation turned upon apparitions; and Civitella now found an opportunity to reproach the Prince for his former coolness towards him. He excused himself, by pleading the state of his mind. Civitella seemed satisfied, but begged of the Prince to follow the methods which he would propose, to eradicate his disorder. His plans were all of such a nature, that he could not help smiling; and by that means he succeeded, at last, to make the company somewhat merry; to which the Prince, however, contributed very little, but gave no signs of dissatisfaction. He at last promised to follow the advice of the Marquis, who could not conceal his joy on the occasion.

"Then, we have you again, my Prince," he exclaimed in exultation. "Do not triumph too soon, Marquis," said the Prince; "will you always be able to find the right means to chase away my gloomy thoughts?" "Always, if you follow my advice, gracious Prince!" "You flatter yourself too much. — When you have proved it to my satisfac-

* At Venice this is not at all extraordinary; for the desire of eating is (probably on account of the sea air) very great. We seldom see Venetians without having something to eat in their hands. In the city, on every side, you see victuals of all kinds to be sold. Even at the Opera-houses you are frequently interrupted by the noise of sellers of provisions; and in every house at midnight you find victuals preparing.

tion, I will believe you ; but I fear that you will not succeed so easily as you expect." " Do you know that confidence is half the remedy ? — Above every thing else, likewise, comply with my first request, and rather make yourself acquainted with the corporeal than the spiritual world ; for, although I know, by experience, your influence in the latter, I nevertheless cannot help fearing, that the gloom, which is the inseparable attendant upon creatures devoid of flesh and bones, might have a greater effect upon your mind. — But did the apparition, which I beheld this night, appear in consequence of your command, or have I incurred your displeasure by any other means ? "

Civitella betrayed great anxiety as he spoke these last words, and the Prince sneered — probably from the association of ideas. The Prince soon resumed his former countenance. I was obliged now to serve tea, and could not hear the end of the conversation ; yet I concluded, from several words which I caught by accident, and from the Prince's countenance, that it had taken a happy turn, and that the entertainment must have ended very well. The midnight hour is past, and although I would willingly chatter with you a little longer, I must finish my letter — I wish for repose.

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